THE

SATURDAY EVENING POST.

1821. THE GREAT FAMILY PAPER FOR HALF A CENTURY. 1871.

Vol. LI. H. PETERSON & CO., [No. 319 Walnut Street. PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1872. TERMS [$3.00 a Year; or, $2.50 if paid in Advance. Single Number, 5 Cents.] No. 28.

OLD DEB HELD THE RUBY CROSS BEFORE HIS EYES: "IT WAS FOUND ON THE KNOLL NORTH OF DUNLEATH," SHE SAID, SIGNIFICANTLY.

SEVEN GRAVES;

OR,

THE HEIRS OF DUNLEATH.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY ESTHER SERLE KENNETH.

CHAPTER XV.

MISSING.

The evening grew late, and Theodora did not return. Little Argemone was the first to miss her. "Thodie is not here! I will not go to bed till she comes!" she said to the nursery maid. At last Fanny went to the Judge:

"If you please, sir, can you tell where Miss Crowningshield is, sir? Miss Gem won't go to bed without her aunt. She's that naughty, to-night, she doesn't mind a word I say to her."

"Send Argemone to me, Fanny."

So the small sinner, in her embroidered night robe, pattered into the drawing-room, and sprang unfeeringly upon her grandfather's knee.

"What makes you so disobedient to-night, Gem?"

"I want my Thodie."

"Do you know where your sister is, Guy?" said the Judge, turning to his youngest son.

Guy shook his head:

"No, sir."

"She must have gone to Arthur's. It's very late for her to be out alone, and Arthur is indisposed and cannot come home with her. One of the servants must be sent for her."

Arthur Crowningshield was the Judge's eldest son, and had married Grace Hamilton, a daughter of one of Danesbury's best families. Their home, called Woodbine, was quite at the other end of the town.

It was more than an hour before Cato returned. Miss Crowningshield was not at Woodbine. Then the family became uneasy.

"She must have gone over to Jack's," said Guy, seizing his cap. "I will go over and see."

Jack Brompton was Gem's father, who had married again. But Theodora was not there. Mrs. Brompton had not seen her for several days. Her husband returned to Ashurst with Guy.

"This must be looked into, Guy. Perhaps she is playing you a trick—but that isn't like Theodora."

They met the Judge in the door.

"*No!*" he said, "*not* with you? We must have the grounds searched instantly. Some accident must have happened to my daughter. Cato, Martha, Tom, get lights!"

The whole family joined in the search. Of course it was fruitless.

Every spot of the grounds was visited. The next day every locality of danger in the neighborhood was searched. All suggestions to any clue of the missing girl's possible whereabouts was instantly snatched at, discussed and followed. But disappointment followed disappointment. The mystery grew deeper and more terrible to the anguished family. It seemed impossible to go on living at Ashurst without Theodora, and when at night the family separated after long consultations, or hours of brooding silence and gloom, they would meet at the breakfast table with haggard faces that told of sleepless nights and hours of solitary suffering. The void in their circle sat like a terrible nightmare upon them.

"And there is no escape from it!" groaned the Judge. "I can never know peace again until my child is found. If she has voluntarily left her home, she must be insane and unable to take care of herself. If she has met with any accident, her body must be lying in some river or morass unburied! She must be found, or I shall go mad."

His children could only answer him with tears.

It was during this terrible season that Paul Ireton became endeared to the family. When other friends sat down in despair, he yet continued his efforts for Theodora's recovery. For weeks he rested neither day nor night. Every agency that could lead to her recovery, he set at work.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. ALEXANDER'S ROOM.

Theodora was borne forcibly to Dunleath. She was bound with such ingenuity, as to render her utterly helpless. An attempt to scream, resulted in temporary suffocation, for Black Norton placed his hand over her mouth outside the blanket. She struggled and lost consciousness.

She lay like one dead in the bottom of the boat—and he rowed down the river. Sculling the wherry carefully down the smooth tide in the darkness, he at length ran it ashore among the bushes.

A carriage stood under the trees. The darkness was so intense, that nothing but eyes long accustomed to it could have seen the vehicle. Mooring the boat—Black Norton lifted the slender, unresisting figure from the bottom, and placing it in the carriage, drove, by a secluded way, to Dunleath.

It was midnight. No one under the roof knew of his arrival.

Granny Var, waking at the first cock-crow, heard, as she often did, heavy footsteps in the direction of Black Norton's rooms. She heard them always with a conviction of evil going on. "He's at it; it's in the blood!" she would groan, yet turning for another nap, with an inward assurance of irresponsibility. Black Norton's grandfather had been a smuggler. Bales of silks, spices, gems, and bags of treasure had been kept in that very room, which the former occupied. The hoary old sinner had hung himself there, and Granny, for one, had always been quite willing to give the apartments a wide berth. She did not grieve that Black Norton had shut them up. "He has *his* reasons," she would mutter, ominously. She had grown seriously afraid of him of late. Any other woman, knowing what Granny Var did of the Anderson race, would have fled in terror; but she, trusting precariously in good fortune, remained. She expected to live and die at Dunleath, though after Black Norton's orgies became frequent, she knew that she might die by his hand. He often threatened to kill her when attendance or food was not ready for him. But Granny had a knack of living with violent people. Abuse she did not mind at all, and molestation she had so far escaped.

She had a feeling, too, that her lot was cast with this strange race—that she was subject to them. That Angus was so little an Anderson had almost dissatisfied her at first. Then the poor old woman grew fond of him. "Guid folk are scarce; mak' much of ane," she would mutter to herself, when thinking of him. The Andersons being of Scotch descent, she had, by them, a store of proverbs.

Old Granny turned in her bed that morning, too weary to care much if Black Norton pulled the house down about their ears. She had grown very old under that roof, and its services burdened her.

Black Norton was in the apartment which had been occupied by Alexander Anderson. A flight of short steps led from it to his sleeping room. A door also opened from it to a small square hall that communicated only with the apartment where his mother had lived and died—the room with a spinnet. These three apartments he had taken possession of, bolted the doors, barred the windows.

The fire on the hearth of Alexander's room flickered on the grim, evil, pictured faces, on the powder horns and riding whips hung upon the lone walls. The unconscious form of Theodora Crowningshield lay upon the floor before it, and Black Norton knelt beside her, bathing her face with spirits.

She looked like one dead. Her delicate features were marble white. Her dark hair lay in a loose shining knot upon her bosom. Her little hands hung loosely at her sides. In this way she had lain for three hours. It was not Black Norton's wish to murder the daughter of his enemy, he was using every effort to resuscitate her.

At length the young lady gave a long, fluttering sigh. A look of joy flashed over Black Norton's lurid face. He watched her breathing for a moment, raised her in his arms, and bore her into the room across the hall. He laid her upon the bed, flung an old cloak of fur over her and came out, locking the door.

Then seating himself before the fire, he reached to the table beside him, poured out a glass of spirits, and drank it off.

"To my friend, the Judge," he laughed as he tossed it off.

He filled the glass again:

"*To myself.* Success forever!"

CHAPTER XVII.

A PRISONER.

Theodora had swooned rather from excess of terror than from the rude treatment she had received. She came to consciousness with a shiver.

Her eyes rested first upon the low ceiling, with its central oaken beam. The beautiful eyes grew wider; she had thought herself waking from some horrible dream in her own chamber. Starting up, she looked with alarm upon the place in which she found herself.

Pantingly she gazed upon the oaken floor, with its square of faded tapestry; the dusty old spinnet; the Louis the Fourteenth chairs and mirror. The three small windows were closely barred, and utter silence reigned.

With no idea whatever where she was, she sat upon the couch and tried to collect her thoughts. So great was her mental disturbance, that for a time she could recollect nothing of what had lately occurred. She pressed her hands to her head, feeling as if she were going mad.

At length dawned upon her the attack upon her person, made as she waited upon the river bank. The letter, the false appointment,—it flashed upon her how she had been duped.

She could not apprehend what was in store for her. She could imagine no reason why she should have been abducted from her home. Where was this quaint, lonely apartment? Who had brought her thither?

A growing light showed her that it was early morning. She did not realize that she was shivering convulsively with cold, but sprang from the couch and looked from the windows. They did not open towards the distant town, but overlooked the gray slope whereon stood the six headstones of the Andersons. Beyond were lonely fields and misty hills.

Half distracted she began pacing the floor. The door she had found locked, and she knew that she was a prisoner. As she thought of home and her father's alarm, she wrung her small hands. While she considered her helplessness, a smothering fear took away her breath.

But physical exhaustion at length somewhat calmed her excitement. Unconsciously she had paced the floor for hours. She flung herself upon the bed, wrapping the fur cloak about her marble limbs, and, after a time, fell into an uneasy sleep.

While she slept the latch clicked slightly, and the door cautiously unclosed. Black Norton's bearded face surveyed the scene.

Satisfied, from his prisoner's faint, regular breathing that she was asleep, he withdrew, and after a few moments appeared with a glass of water and a plate of bread. Placing these carefully upon a table, he cautiously withdrew, again locking the door.

When, at length, Theodora awoke, she seized upon the food, with an instinct of sharp hunger, before she realized how it came there. Then she understood that, while unconscious, she must have had a visitor.

Her parched lips had drained the glass to the bottom. She put it down, tried the door again, and found it locked. She went to the windows; the sun was sinking behind the distant hills. In a sudden passion she clenched the bars in her slender hands and tried to shake them. They were firm; she only bruised the tender flesh. With a moan she sank down upon the floor, and cowered and trembled in the gathering darkness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE STRANGE NEWS.

While the excitement of Miss Crowningshield's loss filled the town, Black Norton was seen here, there, and everywhere. His fiery black horse pawed the frozen ground impatiently while he lingered among the village loungers, and eagerly noted news of all that went forward. The crier had called in the town; the strange occurrence started all the quiet place into life and excitement. Daily there were reports of what the afflicted family were doing for the recovery of the missing girl. The detectives came, and were pointed out in the street. The townspeople turned out nobly in the search. One expedition after another was eagerly started and its progress carefully watched. Day after day the first question asked was—"Any news of the Judge's daughter?" What had been done, what was doing, were the only tidings.

The note signed "Alone" had been found in Theodora's room. But the noiseless river left no traces of her abduction, and Black Norton had been careful of other traces.

"I'll tell you what 'tis, folks," said Saul Pycott, tapping his heavy boot with his ox goad, as he lounged away an hour in the post-office, where the fire of the large outer room was found alluring, "Judge Crowningshield won't live long if that young lady isn't found. He's grown ten years older in the last fortnight."

His companions nodded. There was a grave silence.

"If 'twas a daughter of mine—" began one old man, and then stopped, changing color with emotion.

"There ain't nothing dreadful but what a man'll think of," remarked another. "It's enough to whiten the head of any father."

Then the subject was changed to the price of wood, the men having come in town with loads of it.

Black Norton had been leaning against a door-post, apparently reading a foreign letter, but he heard every word of what had passed, and his lurid and bloodshot eyes gleamed beneath their heavy, down-dropping lids, as he went out into the street.

Throwing himself into the saddle, he galloped out of the town.

He rode at a break-neck pace towards Dunleath. There was a fierce exultation in his hot blood. He shouted and sang to himself in the lonely wood. He lashed his horse, then curbed him till the animal rose upon his haunches. Dashing onward like a maniac, he at length arrived at Dunleath.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE APPEAL.

Theodora had been confined ten days at Dunleath. Insufficient food and warmth had worked a cruel change in her. Her lovely face was deadly pale, her dark eyes heavy and hopeless, her frail hands utterly without strength. Every morning a fever burned in her blood: at noon she began shivering with ague. Food and drink she received with the utmost precariousness, and she barely escaped starvation. To do Black Norton justice, he did not mean to starve her; he forgot to provide her with food, as he forgot to eat himself, for twenty-four hours at a time. She lay on the bed, wrapped in the cloak for warmth, filled with thoughts of anguish or sick fancies, wherein she forgot her present situation, and was once more at Ashurst, surrounded by her friends and relatives. The shrieking of rats in the wall sometimes called her back to consciousness and misery; the bolting or unbarring of doors, or the clatter of a horse's feet upon the stony hillside, were occasionally heard by her; more rarely, Black Norton's voice shouting or calling.

So far she had not seen a human face, for food was put cautiously into the room when she was sleeping, and she had no knowledge of who brought it. But on the tenth morning, she suddenly heard her door unlocked.

She sprang wildly to her feet. Was she to be murdered? Who was coming?

Black Norton entered the room. His face was fierce and cruel as a demon's. He looked at her steadily for a moment, and seeing the deadly pallor of the delicate, lovely countenance seemed to gloat upon it. He smiled—and she had rather he had struck her.

But she was the daughter of a high-toned race. In spite of her physical weakness, she had courage and self-possession.

"Are you my jailor?" she asked calmly.

"Yes," answered Norton, readily.

"And who *are* you?"

"Black Norton, of Dunleath."

His black, burning eyes were terrible. Amazed, bewildered, for a moment, Theodora could not speak.

"Why am I abducted and brought to this place?" she said, at length.

"For vengeance. Yes, for vengeance!" shouted Norton, striding up and down the room. "Did you think I was to be scorned and trampled on forever by your cursed clan? Was I to be insulted, shunned, and neglected by these paltry villagers, with their paltry pride? They shall have reason to fear me, now—fear me, and the proudest of them come to my bitter terms."

He seemed talking to himself, shaking his clenched hands violently.

"But what harm have I done you that I should be forced to suffer in this way?" asked Theodora. She thought the man mad.

"See," she said, appealingly, "I am pale and weak. I have been without food and fire. I shall die. Do you want to kill me—I, who never injured you?"

"I will give you food; you shall not die," said Black Norton, with emphasis.

He turned, and going into his own rooms, returned with a tray containing broken meats, bread, and wine in abundance.

"Here, eat. I do not mean that you shall die," he said, placing the tray upon a table before her.

She poured out a glass of the wine and drank it. Attenuated, weak, she was yet, in every motion, graceful. Norton's eyes grew harder and yet more cruel as he looked at her. He muttered a curse under his breath. The angry blood stained his swarthy face.

"You will stay here awhile longer," he said, wagging his black head, and deliberately left the room.

Theodora sprang after him, but the lock clicked as she laid her hand upon the door, and it was unyielding. With a cry she sank almost senseless upon the floor.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ESCAPE.

She lay in an anguish of despair. When she thought of prayer it seemed as if God would not hear her. At length she found relief in a passionate burst of weeping.

She rose and staggered to the bed. She felt herself seriously ill. If she died, would her father ever know what had become of her? "Oh! father, father, father," she cried, wringing her frail hands. The jewels upon them sparkled mockingly before her swollen eyes. Moaning, she at length slowly lost consciousness in a sleep of exhaustion.

When she awoke a settled fever was preying upon her low strength. She could not rise. Moans of pain came from her parched lips. She turned her face from the sunlight streaming through the barred windows, for its pale beams pierced her head like knives. She was only partially conscious of where she was. Slowly she sank again into stupor, and the sun set.

When Black Norton opened the door the next day, he heard a voice singing. He stood staring into the room. Theodora, stretched upon the bed, yet risen and resting upon her elbow, looked at him with brilliant, unconscious eyes, and with a pitiful mockery of lightness of heart, sang:

"Oh, the wee green nook, the sly green nook,
The wee, shy nook for me,
Where the wheat is waving, light and brown,
And the wind is fresh and free!"

The favorite old song that she sang upon the river bank, and had sung a hundred times to loving listeners. He saw that she was light-headed, seriously ill.

After a moment's perplexed thought, he gave her some water, which she drank eagerly. She sat up, pushed the soft, tangled hair from her face, and went on humming.

He flung some blankets upon the bed, then finding himself unable to do more, went away again.

For the next twenty-four hours Theodora was quite unconscious.

But on the second night she suddenly started up, and looked around her. The moon was shining brightly into her prison, lying in checkered sheets upon the floor, illuminating the dusty walls. She started off the couch, stood wavering upon the floor, looking with silent bewilderment around her, and then stepped noiselessly to the barred windows. She went from one to another. At last she turned towards the door. Like some wild, tortured animal, she sought a means of escape, and it was delirium which gave her strength.

The door yielded to her hand. She was too unreasoning to wonder at this, but stole swiftly across the hall and unclosed an opposite door.

It was the room where Black Norton lay sleeping. The couch stood near the centre of the room; a fire was dying upon the hearth. Norton's heavy figure was motionless; his breath came evenly. Like a spirit Theodora stole past, and out at the opposite door, first softly unlocking it.

The click of the lock awoke Black Norton. He started up; but Theodora was gone.

CHAPTER XXI.

BLOODSHED.

She had escaped into the centre of the house.

Angus Norton, wakened in his chamber from a light sleep, saw a slender figure, with loose hair and jewelled hands, steal across the bed's foot. He started up upon his elbow, but it was gone. It had gone out by the open entrance, or disappeared at the opposite door. He had heard that the place was haunted, and thought he had seen a ghost.

Theodora flitted back into the hall. Timour, the great dog, rose from a mat, and instead of growling, wagged his tail and fixed an inquiring glance upon her, as if he would follow her. Her slender fingers slid back the bolt of the door. A leap, and she was under the night sky, free!

The cold wind blew upon her, the sky arched over her—she knew not whither she went. Away, away, like a fawn—her tender feet bruised, all unheeded, by stones—the cloud of her dark hair lifted from her shoulders—her face white, her beautiful, insane eyes seeing nothing that they ever afterwards remembered, she sped on.

At a roadside cottage, an old dame, nursing her sick grandchild, saw a white face, wild and pallid,—that of a woman,—with tresses of falling hair, look in at the low window. Before she could scream, it was gone.

A drunken man, reeling two miles home from the tavern, saw a female figure darting along the rocks of a ravine. He thought it the spirit of his dead wife following him, and shook with terror.

Black Norton, coming down from his chamber, took the wrong passage, and came straight to the room of Granny Var. The old woman stood in the doorway, in a night-gown of gray flannel, a candle in her hands, listening.

"Where is she?" demanded Norton, with an oath.

She stared at him. He thought she had sheltered Theodora, and savagely struck her down. But when he had striden over her prostrate body, looked into the room, and found no one, he dashed away.

Theodora, flying through the night, fell at last. It was not long before Black Norton reached the spot. She was senseless, and he bore her back to Dunleath.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DEATH OF GRANNY VAR.

When morning came, Granny Var was found dead and stark at the door of her sleeping room. A physician, called by Angus, from the town, thought the event was caused by the conditions of extreme age—and who should deny or say otherwise?

Only John Var, who seldom entered the precincts, sleeping in an out house below the hill, shook his head, and went about with a gloomy brow.

After this, Angus Norton could not but believe that Dunleath was haunted. Through the spirit of pervading desolation and desertion he observed strange sights and sounds. Footsteps pacing in the barred room overhead, while Black Norton was away; voices, when he returned—or met his father, cursing in solitude. There were no servants or dependents about the house; the two men lived as best they might—in fact, seeing little of each other. But Angus was sure that old Granny still lingered at Dunleath. He felt her presence in the old rooms—and she seemed warning him with a noiseless voice. As he sat before the open fire, his arm, in its sling, lying upon his breast, she seemed standing behind his chair, or touching his aching head with her feeble fingers.

The news of her death crept slowly among the older inhabitants of the town. There were but few who knew of the old woman's existence. The reader will remember that old Deb Pycott was one.

"Did they let her die a natural death—the men of Dunleath?" she asked, sharply.

"She was found dead on the floor of her room. I had the news from Grandsire Niles," said Rose reluctantly, as she took off her hood, having just come from the market.

"Umph! She was murdered," said Deb.

Rose was angry, yet hardly willing to raise a storm by a word of opposition. The blood darted into her cheeks, but she was silent. But then Rose remembered only one of the men of Dunleath.

Deb spared neither. They were assassins and cut-throats, and had certainly murdered their old servitor. They spared neither the lives nor fame of men or women. They were lawless, and deserved well to be shunned, as they were.

Rose stopped her ears and ran out of the hut. If she might, she would have run straight to the arms of the younger heir of Dunleath, cut-throat and assassin though he was termed by her irate old relative. Her heart ached with love for him. She looked towards the west in the direction of Dunleath, though she could not see it. The bare stillness of the woods oppressed her. She strolled down to the fountain. Here the tears came, and a burst of weeping relieved the fullness of her heart's secret.

"He will come to-morrow, perhaps. He must be well. If he loves me half as well as I love him, he will find a way to see me," she said to herself, pacing over the sere leaves back to the hut.

For great as her longing was, Rose dared not now go to Dunleath. She had seen Black Norton's dark face in the market, and the sight revived all her old terror of him. Even to see her lover, she dared not put herself in his way, venture within his precincts.

And Angus Norton yet remained an invalid. A broken shoulder does not heal in a day, even though the owner is loved by a beautiful girl.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PART OF THE PLOT.

Theodora crouched before the embers on the hearth. She had grown wan and sickly. Strength had died from her limbs, all light from her pallid face. Her mind, like her body, had become dull with suffering. She sat huddled upon the floor, her head, resting in her folded arms, on the seat of a chair.

Suddenly Black Norton stood beside her.

She looked at him dully for a moment, while he gazed down at her sharply.

"Are you sick?" he said.

She did not reply—yielded her wrist, passively, as he counted the feeble strokes of her pulse. He dropped her hand, and drew a chair to the hearth. He continued to look at her for a moment, and she bore his gaze with the same unnatural insensibility. His black brows contracted. Had the girl quite lost her mind?

"Do you want to go home?" he asked her.

The expression of her eyes altered—yet she did not speak.

"To go home—to your father?" said Norton, closely watching her.

After a moment she said "yes," slowly, but it was evident that she did not clearly comprehend.

"Well, you shall go," answered Norton, speaking as if to a child. "Get ready. Comb your hair; see here."

He lifted a strand of the neglected braids lying upon her shoulders. She took it from his hand, and began slowly combing it out with her thin fingers.

"That is right."

Without the least show of excitement she sat and elaborately braided her beautiful hair. Norton looked at her for a moment while thus engaged. He then brought her a basin and ewer of water, and as intently watched her bathe her temples and hands. She turned to him then passive as a child.

He unlocked the door and led her into an adjoining room.

As he crossed this apartment, and descended a stair he panted as if he had been running. He unlocked a stout door at the foot of the stair, and taking Theodora by the wrist led her forward. She was still silent and passive.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A CLUE.

The sunset's red light illumined Paul Ireton's tall figure and chestnut beard as he stood in an open glade of Blackmere woods. The man had grown pale and thin in the last few weeks. His dark eyes looked large and hollow. He leaned against the hole of a tree in a despondent, weary attitude.

That he loved Theodora Crowningshield faithfully there could be no doubt. His efforts to recover her had been herculean. But that morning a sudden despair came over him.

"*Gone*, gone forever, my beautiful girl! How can I believe it? It is worse than death. She never cared for my love, but that did not make it less. For years I have fed my heart on thoughts of her. Her delicate brow, her dark eyes, her womanly charm, her fine, sweet gayety of manner,—I see them constantly beckoning me forward; and yet I cannot find her. My God! *can* she be dead, or otherwise lost to me, *forever?*"

He clenched his hands and set his teeth as if the thought stabbed him. Groaning aloud, he started up, and continued his rapid walk.

As he emerged from the wood he caught the light of Deb's hut. But he was too occupied with his painful thoughts to see Deb herself until she spoke close to his side:

"You want my help, eh, Paul Ireton?"

"*Yours?* No. Stay—perhaps—what can you tell me, good mother?"

"Some things ye have not thought of, maybe. But my tellings have a price."

"Yes, yes, of course. Tell me anything that will lead to the recovery of Miss Crowningshield, and you shall have money without stint."

She hobbled hurriedly before him up the rocky steps of the hut, and held open the door for his entrance.

Rose was there, and the little habitation wore a more orderly and home-like aspect than when old Deb lived alone. The floor and hearth were clean, the furniture mended, a rose bloomed in a pot on the window ledge; even the black cat, Beelzebub, had improved in appearance, appearing a more domestic character as he purred at her feet with a red ribbon about his neck.

Rose smiled shyly at Ireton's salutation, and retired.

Old Deb, who had taken off her red cloak and lighted a candle, suddenly flared it in Ireton's pale face.

"Umph! How long since your sweetheart went?" she said.

Ireton stared at her for a moment.

"It is three weeks ago to-night," he said, at length.

Deb set her candle on the table.

"He would beard the lion in his den *for her*," she muttered.

She went to a corner of the hut, and commenced overturning the contents of an old wooden chest. Ireton sat listlessly absorbed in his meditations, his gaze fixed upon the fire.

Deb came suddenly behind him, and held some glittering object before his eyes.

It was a small ruby cross to which a broken chain of gold was attached. He caught his breath—snatched it from her hand. Deb smiled grimly as he bent nearer to the light, closely examining it.

"Woman, where did you get this? It is hers—Theodora's!"

"I know it."

"How came *you* by it?"

"I found it on a knoll, north of Dunleath, three days ago."

"Three days ago," repeated Ireton, eagerly; then added, more slowly: "But it might have been lost there long ago."

"Did the Judge's daughter walk often on the knoll beyond Dunleath?" inquired Deb, significantly. "A lone, rocky, barren spot, ye know."

"No," replied Ireton, readily. "What should call her there?"

"Aye." Deb assented.

Ireton's hand trembled as he held the little treasure.

"*Lately* lost," he murmured with a quick breath, and a flash of the eye.

He hastily pulled out his purse, and placed several heavy gold pieces upon the table.

"Tell me all you know, my good woman. If I find her, I will make you rich for the rest of your days."

She watched his face as he bent towards her.

"Is the Judge's daughter the *first* woman stolen in this town, do ye think?" she said, after a moment. "Before *your* time, two went—the bride of one honest man, and the daughter of another. When the wife flit, an Anderson of Dunleath went also; and the two lived in foreign parts. Meg's husband went crazy, and never would believe it—crazy-like he grew, an' died. An' Timothy Pycott's daughter—day an' night the neighbors searched for her, to find her drowned in the river, with Alexander Anderson's scarf twisted tight about her neck. He was a young man then, and sowing his wild oats, and what was one golden-haired woman more or less? We knew he murdered Nelly—but there was no rich man to take the poor girl's part; he was not meddled with."

She paused. Ireton's face was very pale: his eyes set and glittering. The breath came in quick pants from his chest. For a moment he could not speak.

"Ye know Black Norton?" said Deb, in a lower tone.

"Yes," answered Ireton; "I have seen him."

The old woman pointed to the chain and ruby cross.

"'Twas found on the knoll, north of Dunleath, three days ago," she said, significantly.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE RUBY RING.

The year 1798 was drawing to a close, Wexford and Wicklow had sunk into silence and submission, and the rebellion in Ireland was virtually over. With but a few exceptions, its leaders had been secured, exiled from the country, or condignly punished.

Among the last who remained, skulking, hiding, hunted like a beast from place to place, unable to escape, with a reward on his head, and despair in his heart, was a younger son of Lord Thomas Fitzroy, a loyal nobleman of Kildare. The adventures of this young aristocrat form a singular page in the final records of that disastrous year.

It was a night in November—dark, wild and wet. In a mountain-gap, midway betwixt the counties of Kildare and Wicklow, stood a ruinous cabin, built up against the bare face of a rock, with gorse and furze-bushes toppling over it, and a bit of lonely heath stretching away in front. In this cabin, on the night of which I write, over a smouldering peat-fire, two men were sitting alone.

One was a middle-aged peasant, in a suit of tattered frieze, with a cropped head, a dark, wily, unshaven face, and a big blackthorn shillalah flung down on the hearth beside him.

The other was younger by many years. He sat bending over the fire, chilled to the bone by a long, dreary tramp. He was a tall, handsome fellow of five-and-twenty, bearing himself like a prince.

Around his pale, haggard face, his unpowdered hair showered, silky and black as the raven's wing. The hands he stretched to the fire, too, were the hands of an aristocrat—slender and white as a woman's. On one glittered a ring set with a heart-shaped ruby, very costly and curious, and ruffles of fine lace had been carefully tucked up under his coarse frieze coat-sleeves.

The cabin where the two sat was bare and desolate enough. A creel of turf stood on the hearth, from which the elder of the two occasionally fed the sulky fire.

The wind sonched through the furze-bushes outside, and tramped across the heath like human footsteps. The men seemed ill at ease as they listened.

"Tantry," sighed he of the long, unpowdered hair, "we had better have pushed boldly toward the coast. That way lies my only hope of escape."

"Faith, yer honor," whined Tantry, "ye're no' thinking o' Gaff and his men, and the whole legion o' cut-throat sojers sarching ivvry inch o' that same coast for yer lordship, and aching in ivery bone o' their bodies for the thousand pounds reward. Ah, it's a fine bit o' money—is a thousand pounds!"

Something in Tantry's tones seemed to strike his young master unpleasantly. He looked hard at him for a moment; then, as if ashamed of even a flitting suspicion, he put a hand caressingly on his shoulder.

"Tell me, Tantry, are we safe here?"

"Shure, that we are," answered Tantry. "Would I have brought yer honor into danger—think ye? Take heart now, and brek yer fast wid this bit o' oaten bannock I thaved from Widdy Maloney down in the bog."

He drew the cake from his pocket, and tendered a share to his master, but the young man shook his head.

"No, Tantry. I have no appetite. My heart is like lead. This long skulking has worn me out. When a man's strength begins to go, hope is swift to follow after. Great Heaven! Six months ago, a spoiled darling of Fortune, with the world all before me; and to-night a hunted outlaw, with a price on my head, and nothing before my sight, sleeping or waking, but the gallows!"

"Whist!" said Tantry. "Whist! A night's rest will make a new man o' ye. Troth, the widdy's cake is mighty dhry. It's a sup o' mountain-dew I'm needing to wash it down wid. Whist! Hear the rain pour, and the moan o' the wind out yon in the furze."

A gleam shot into his eyes as he spoke, but his master did not see it. He sat, deeply despondent, scowling at the fire, his handsome head dropped on his hands.

"Tantry, faithful heart," he said, "you have shared my doleful wanderings long enough. To be found with me now would be your utter ruin. You must leave me! We must part here to-night! You will have no trouble, I think, in getting out of the country at once—to France or to America."

He drew out a well-filled purse, and counted from it fifty pounds. Tantry hung his ill-shaped head for a moment, but recovered quickly, and received the money with good grace.

"May the saints bless yer honor! Hivin be yer bed! Ye've a ginerous heart. Long life to yer lordship, in spite o' prisint troubles! But, if I desart ye here, what will ye do? Where will ye go? What's to become o' ye?"

"No matter," answered the master, sadly. "You must now think only of yourself. Hark! What is that?"

Both started—both listened. There was a crackling sound without in the gorse and furze of the heath.

"It's the wind, yer honor," stammered Tantry, or, maybe, a moor-hen or a fox creeping to covert. Have ye yer pistols ready?"

The other touched his breast significantly.

"Faix! it's gone now! Ye'll hear it no more. I'll spread yer honor a bed by the hearth, and ye can lie down and sleep. Give me the pistols, and I'll sit here beside ye and watch."

For the second time the master eyed the servant in a way that boded trouble.

"No," he answered, coldly. "I will not lie down—I cannot sleep. Hark! There's the noise again. Good Heaven it is a footstep!"

He started up from his seat. So, also, did Tantry, and seized the blackthorn cudgel from the hearth.

At the same moment voices were heard without, and a blow from a gunstock shook the barred door of the shanty.

"Open!" roared a voice. "Open, in the king's name!"

"Holy Virgin!" gasped Tantry, "yer honor's lost!"

Tall and pale, and terrible, his master turned and looked at him.

"Traitor!" he answered, "you have betrayed me!"

The guilty wretch fell back, cowering, in his seat.

"Open!" shouted the voice again, and muskets clattered, and the old door shook to the stout shoulders set against it. "Open, Tantry Nee! Where are you, man? Is Fitzroy there?"

"Ay! Break down the door!" cried the wretch, and as it fell, he ran and hid himself among the soldiers on the threshold. A scarlet figure, with a drawn sword in his hand, stepped into the shanty. Fitzroy tore the pistols from his bosom, and stood at bay.

"Back!" he thundered. "Who are you, and what do you want here?"

"I am an officer of the Crown," answered Captain Gaff; "and I want a rebel and traitor called Arthur Fitzroy, son of Lord Fitzroy, of Kildare. Surrender, sir—put up your weapons and surrender? Take you we must, dead or alive!"

"Dead you may take me. Alive you never shall!" cried Fitzroy, and hurled himself on the blocked-up door, firing both pistols as he went.

The shots took effect—one in the brain of the wretched Tantry, the other in the heart of a soldier just crossing the threshold.

Beating about him with the butts of the smoking weapons, Fitzroy actually forced his way through the door, and planted one foot on the dark, free heath!

Then came a blow in the forehead from a gunstock, and, as he sank, covered with blood, he fell to the ground.

Under a strong guard they hurried him on that night to Dublin Newgate, to answer to the charge of treason, sedition, and murder, before the Court of the King's Bench.

It was a stormy time. The sittings of this court were often prolonged into the small hours of night.

Fitzroy received his death sentence standing in the dock, with the ghastly light of the midnight lamps falling on his pale face and on the arms of the military who filled the body of the court-room. Slowly his dark, scornful eyes swept the benches.

"I thank you for your gracious punishment," he said, and went out with the officers, while Captain Gaff cleared the howling galleries at the point of the bayonet.

Death! Death by the halter! That was his doom. All the following day, prone and pale, he lay on his straw pallet, listening to the hammering of the scaffold going up for him without—watching its awful shadow darken along his grated window.

About twilight, Captain Gaff entered the cell with the turnkey.

"Is there anything," said Gaff, who was really a kind-hearted man, "that I can do for you?"

"Yes," answered Fitzroy; "send me a priest, that I may confess."

Gaff departed at once to find one.

An hour or two after, he brought to the condemned cell Father Fleming, an old parish priest, and a staunch loyalist.

The turnkey locked the good father in with the prisoner, and left them alone together. At the end of a half hour, he went to release him.

Father Fleming came forth very silent and sad, his aged figure bent almost double, his face well concealed in the folds of his blue cloak.

"Your reverence," said the turnkey, "has he made his peace with God?"

"Yes, my son," was the subdued answer, "leave him in peace."

The turnkey peered into the cell, and, by the dim light there, saw the prisoner lying on his straw pallet, with his face to the wall. He locked the iron door again, conducted the priest through the passage, and out to the prison gate.

"Good-night, holy father," he said, at parting.

"Good-night, my son," was the low answer.

With a parting benison Father Fleming turned and disappeared straightway into the night.

Shortly after, Captain Gaff appeared in the turnkey's quarters.

"Has the priest gone?" he asked.

"Ay; but just now," answered the turnkey. "Did you not meet him on the quay?"

"No," said Gaff. "I've an odd feeling, somehow, about the prisoner. Let us go and look at him."

They went, and found Fitzroy on his straw pallet, breathing heavily. Gaff bent over him, then started back with an oath.

Not Fitzroy, but Father Fleming, lay before them, gagged, purple, helpless, his feet pinioned as he lay, his hands bound fast to his side! The good priest's cloak and outer garments had been torn from him, and replaced by those worn by Fitzroy. In fact, the cunning rebel had fairly outwitted his jailers. Out of the very shadow of the gallows he had flown, and left them an empty cage.

"Sound the alarm!" roared Gaff. "Ring the prison bell! Call out the guard!"

And while the guard tumbled out of their quarters, and the great bell clanged, the gag was taken from Father Fleming's mouth, his bonds cut, and he told his story, in the following manner:

"He seemed very weak," said the old priest. "To rise, he could not; so I knelt by him here, with my ear close down to hear his confession. In the very midst of it he leaped upon me, strong as a savage, bore me down head first into the straw, gagged, bound, stripped me in a breath. He was young and I old. He was stout and I weak. I could not cry out, and I had no strength to resist. God forgive him!"

Gaff was furious. He set off, like a blood-hound, in pursuit.

Fitzroy was suffering from a wound in the head, and he had but a half-hour's start—it was hardly possible that he could escape.

All that night they searched—all the following day and the next night. The next day they had tracked him to the little town of Ballymore, twenty miles south of the city of Dublin.

Gaff threw this town into dire confusion, searched the houses of all suspected persons, and distributed freely descriptions of the escaped prisoner's person, and offers of reward. Then he left his noisy squad of soldiers carousing in an ale-house, and, with his sword clanking, his scarlet uniform glittering, his flaxen queue beautiful to see, the officer of the Crown strutted through the principal street of Ballymore to a suburb, where a cottage stood, with a tidy patch of garden before it, and a flax-field stretching away in the rear. Down a green *boreen* went Gaff, and stopped at the door, and rapped upon it lustily with his sword.

"Run, Katty!" called a shrill voice within; "it's me nephew that's come!"

Directly the bolt was drawn back, and Captain Gaff saw in the opening a lovely face, like a wild rose, set in rippling clusters of chestnut hair, and a ravishing figure, in a lace bodice and a russet petticoat. Gaff's eyes glowed.

"Ay, it is I, Katty, dear," said he: and he snatched the girl rudely, and bent to kiss her rich, ripe lips.

"Leave me alone!" she cried, angrily, and tore herself free, and fled down the little passage he following.

"Katty!" he implored, "wait a little! By my soul! you grow lovelier and more flinty-hearted every day! What's a kiss, now? Tut, don't be so niggard!"

Katty burst into a room at the end of the passage, where a fire burned and an air of comfort prevailed, and a gaunt old spinster, in a lace cap, sat knitting by the hearth.

"The captain's come, ma'am!" said Katty, and, with a burning face, she fled through another door and vanished.

Captain Gaff pranced up to the hearth, his rather disgraceful manner growing respectable at once.

"My dear aunt," said he, and bent and kissed the black mit on Miss Connel's hand—"my dear aunt, I have come, with your kind permission, to take tea with you."

The old Irish gentlewoman motioned him to a seat. She looked over his scarlet uniform and clanging sword with indulgent eyes.

"You're welcome, nephew," she said, in her rich brogue. "Is it ye, sure, that's brought the soldiers down to Ballymore this day? Whatever are ye doing down here in this bit o' a town, as true to his majesty as Lunnon itself!"

Captain Gaff kept his greedy eyes on the door through which Katty had vanished.

"Call that child back, do!" he urged, and let her hear the news. It will put you both on your guard. I consider it very risky for two women like you—one feeble, and the other handsome as a houri—to live alone here in these trying times! A new uprising may be expected at any moment!"

"Lord have mercy!" screamed Miss Connel. "Katty! Whatever do you mean, nephew? Have the ribils come to Ballymore?"

"One has been here, at least," said Captain Gaff, devouring Katty with his amorous glances, as she shyly opened the door. "The most dangerous one now left unhung, I mean Fitzroy, who helped to lead the rebels at Castlebar."

Gaff then proceeded to relate the story of his capture and escape, and the vain chase he had been leading the authorities for the last two days and nights.

Katty grew pale, and Miss Connel shook with horror.

"And he has been at Ballymore!" muttered Katty, crossing herself. "Holy Virgin, protect us!"

"Faith, we'll be murdered in our beds!" cried Miss Connel, "and the thatch burnt over us! I must have double locks put on the doors, and send the silver to Dublin."

Artfully Captain Gaff soothed the fears he had provoked. Ballymore had been thoroughly searched, and no Fitzroy found therein. Consequently, it was pretty certain the arch-rebel had gone on further.

Jocelyn's "fox-hunters" were on his track, too, and captured he must be in a few hours; and while Gaff was talking, Katty brought in Miss Connel's tea, and spread the beautiful damask cloth, and lighted the candles; and the pair, nephew and aunt, drew up to the board together.

"Tell me the gossip at the barracks," said Miss Connel. "No, niver another word of the ribils—Katty will be rinning off with that smuggling blade o' a Larry Blake, jist for the sake o' a lad's protection, and I'd not part wid Katty yet for silver or goold. The society news, mind ye. Have ye found a rich heiress to your liking yet, nephew?"

"No," answered the captain, disconsolately; "the Dublin heiresses are all ugly as sin. None are to my mind. Hang me! How comes this little Katty of yours to be such a beauty? If she had a thousand a year, I'd marry her to-morrow?"

"Do you mane it, man?" asked Miss Connel, with an odd look at him, while she cut the slices of very thick bread and butter.

"Hang me if I don't!" roared the captain, and then Katty appeared, bearing a jug of buttermilk, and he leered at her in a way that turned her white with rage and red with shame in a moment.

"Maybe I'll remind ye o' that same some day," chuckled Miss Connel. "There! take your eyes off the lass—she's none o' yer light Dublin hussies. Katty, avourneen, make haste wid yer own tay; and milk the cow, and make things fast for the night. The story o' that roaring ribil has given me a turn."

Fast fled Katty from Gaff's wicked eyes. Her supper over in the dark kitchen, she took the pail from the dresser, and went out to milk the cow in the yard opening behind the cottage.

In one corner of this yard was a haystack, from which a dun-colored cow stood feeding, and waiting to be milked. Beyond the yard was a hedge, and a black ditch, and the flax-field, whose pungent earthy odor filled the damp air. Out toward the west the silver rim of a young moon shone through a clump of thorn-trees.

Katty was searching around the haystack for her milking-stool, when Gaff came leaping the hedge into the yard, and, unwinding a bright ribbon from his pocket, flung it over her chestnut hair.

"One kiss, Katty, and you shall have this," said he.

"Away wid ye," answered Katty, ponting and frowning.

Gaff approached her with passionate eyes.

"Won't you take the ribbon, pretty darling? Won't you cease hating me for a little space? Ah, Katty, how can you be so cruel? I am mad with love for you!"

"Ye are that?" said Kitty, her violet-colored eyes snapping.

"I am! I am!" cried Gaff, actually bending the knee to her, as she stood there with the moonlight on her ripe, rich beauty. "By my soul, I love you devotedly! You have bewitched me out of all sense and reason! I have thought of nothing but you since I was last here! Ah, Katty, what shall I say, what do, to melt that hard heart?"

"I don't understand the words of fine gentlemen like ye!" scoffed Katty, with deepening color. "Is it yer wife yer asking me to be, Captain Gaff?"

It was now the officer's turn to redden. He rose from his ridiculous position.

"You don't understand, child," he stammered. "A gentleman cannot always marry as his heart dictates. He owes something to society and the world, you know——"

"Stop!" cried Katty. "Sure, that's enough! Take your ribbon!" and she flung it at him disdainfully. "Go! Go, or I will scream for the mistress!"

"You will not listen to me, then?" said Gaff, with a muttered oath.

"Not I, ye villain!" answered Katty, blazing with anger and scorn. "Git ye out o' the yard, I say! Git ye out, and go tell the mistress what ye've said to me this night!"

Sorely discomfited, Gaff vaulted over the hedge, and went back to the cottage.

Hardly had he disappeared when a jaunting-car stopped at the foot of the *boreen*. Down from it leapt a sturdy fellow in frieze and small-clothes, with a black dhudeen pipe stuck in his hat, and a smell of salt water about him. He sidled up to the hedge and peered over at Katty.

"It's I. A fair evening to ye, avourneen," called Larry. "Och, by me sowl! may I come over the hedge to ye?"

"No?" answered Katty, tossing her chestnut hair. "Keep yer own side, Larry Blake. I've naught to say to ye. If it's bad to have no lovers, it's a deal worse to have too many."

"Whist, darlint! whist, my girleen! There's a way in which ye can soon be rid o' thim all—all but one, avourneen—he that loves ye best, ye know!"

"Faith, I don't!" scoffed Katty.

Larry tapped with his oak sprig on the gate.

"Ye've only to marry me, asthore—ah, the heart lapes in my bosom at the very word! Come, darlint; come, take this white *nappikeen*, all covered wid lace, that I've brought ye from over the wather."

But Katty milked on like mad, and only shook her head, though he held the 'kerchief toward her in a luring way, on the end of his oaken sprig.

"Be off wid ye, ye wild, smuggling blade! I'll warrant the king's customs never saw that dab! It's not I that wants yer gifts, Larry! Be off!"

After some vain pleading, Larry stubbornly fixed his rejected offering to the post of the gate, and went his way.

Having thus disposed of both lovers, Katty finished her milking, put her foaming pail on the ground beside the haystack, and went to drive the cow under the thatched roof of the byre.

She came back directly for the pail, and was lifting it to go, when she heard a sudden rustle in the hay at her feet. The next moment out from it was thrust a human hand—the hand of a man, small and white, with a curious heart-shape ruby shining on the little finger. It beckoned toward Katty's pail.

"Give me to drink," she heard a voice groan, "I am dying with thirst!"

Then the hay heaved upward, and out from it peered a face, white, haggard, with a bandage round the forehead, and long, unpowdered hair falling darkly on either side, and a pair of dark, agonized eyes uplifted to her own.

Katty started back in terror.

"Holy Virgin! Who be ye?" cried she.

"Hist! for God's sake!" he groaned, "and give me the pail."

She lifted it at once to his lips, and held it while he drank deeply and feverishly. While doing this, Katty saw that he wore the dress of a priest, and that his cloak was spattered here and there with the blood that had flowed from his wounded head.

"Merciful Heaven!" she cried, paralyzed with horror, "ye are that roaring ribil, Fitzroy?"

"Yes," he murmured, "yes."

"Ye've come to murder us all in our beds, and burn the thatch over us!" cried Katty, and dropped her pail, and fled for dear life to the gate. She tore it open, trembling in every limb; then stopped short and looked back.

He lay half in and half out of the hay, one hand extended piteously toward her, his upturned face full of agony. The terrible rebel, after all, was but a man, wounded and suffering; young, too, and remarkable handsome.

As the girl looked, her fears seemed melting away. She turned quickly, and ran straight back to him.

"What are ye doing here?" she said. "What do ye want?"

"I am hiding from the halter," he gasped. "I have been on the road two days and nights, with those hell-hounds at my heels. I am wounded, too, as you see."

"Whist! said Katty. "Whist! Rise up, man, and come wid me."

She took him by the shoulder.

He looked up at her with dark, despairing eyes.

"Surely," he gasped, "surely, a woman with a face like yours, will not betray me?"

"As Heaven hears me, no! Into the byre wid ye quick! There's a nest in the loft where ye can hide. Spake no more, for God's sake! Gaff is close by in the cottage. If he hears us, ye are lost!"

She helped him to rise, pushed him under the thatch, and up a ladder to the loft in question.

"Lie down in the straw," she commanded, "and keep still. I'll go and bring ye a bite and a sup."

She fastened the door, replaced the hay about the stack, then took up her pail, and went into the cottage. Gaff had already departed.

"Bolt and bar all the doors this night, Katty," said Miss Connel, "and bring the spoons and the cream-jug and the pitcher in to me. It will be a mercy if either of us live to see the morning, wid that ribil hull of Bashan loose in the town."

While gathering up the spoons Katty thieved quietly from the little pantry a broken bottle of wine and a generous supply of food. At the first opportunity she slipped out to the byre, opened the door, and crept up to the loft.

"Speak!" she whispered, timidly, standing on the top of the ladder, with the moon-beams that drifted through the cracks in the thatch slanting upon her. "Speak! Are ye here?"

His faint answer brought her timidly to his side. He was lying among the straw, supporting himself on one arm, his handsome face gleaming ghastly white through his falling raven hair.

"I've brought ye food," said Katty, "and a sup o' wine, and a bit o' clean linen for yer wound. There! Eat and drink, first of all!"

He obeyed her in silence.

Having satisfied his hunger, he looked suddenly up at her.

"Who are you?" he said.

"The servant, my lord, of a gentlewoman in the cottage hard by."

"Your name?"

"Katty Shane."

He was silent, watching intently this girl who held his life in her hand.

"If I am retaken before I can leave Ireland, I shall be hanged!" he said, through his teeth. "It is not death I fear, but their mode of profaning it. What do I say? Alive they will never take me again! Thank God, I have been able to provide for that!"

He touched his breast, where a common pocket-knife, which he had procured since his escape from Dublin, was lying concealed. By the dark, desperate look that overswept his face, it was plain the threat was no idle one.

"Tell me, where is Gaff?" he asked.

"Gone back to the ale-house," answered Katty, shyly. "The town is full o' his soldiers, sarching for ye. Ye heard him, maybe, outside in the yard this night?"

He smiled faintly.

"Yes. Had you given his suit a different answer, little colleen, I should hardly have trusted my life with you. Ah, I must fare on to the coast—I must find a boat there, at all hazards, to take me to France."

"And how will ye do it?" said Katty. "Do ye know a friend from a foe? The thousand pounds reward offered for ye in Dublin has been doubled since ye escaped. It betrayed ye once—it may do it again."

"True," he answered, breathing hard. "Am I safe here?"

"Maybe, if ye lie low and keep still. None come near the byre but me. Let me put this linen round the wound now, and be gone."

With some cool spring water that she had brought, Katty bathed the clotted wound, and wrapped the clean, soft bandage carefully about it. His silky black hair fell in masses over her hands in the process. He lay looking up at her with adoring eyes. As she looked back at him, the girl's whole soul trembled and melted in her with compassion.

"Take heart and rest," she said, gently, laying the handsome head down on the straw. "Ye'll not be disturbed to-night, and when ye hear the door creaking at dawn, ye'll know it is me."

He pressed the hand that had ministered to him so tenderly, again and again to his lips. She felt tears fall on it.

"Farewell," he murmured. "I shall count the hours till you come again."

The next moment she was gone, shutting the darkness in upon him, and taking the moonlight with her.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

☞ Popular side-shows—Pretty cheeks.

☞ Indian reservations—Scalp.

☞ Fashionable young ladies, like letters, require stamps, or the males reject them.

☞ Louisville has "a female professional pugilist."

☞ A single hair of the Emperor Napoleon I. was once sold for over one hundred dollars at a fair in London.

☞ The "Parepa Sausage Cutter" is the name of a new "dog-chewing" patent, which the inventor has named after a renowned cantatrice.

☞ Already, says the Boston Traveller, Stokes is being talked of as a lecturer for next season.

☞ It is said that large spots can now be seen on the sun. Perhaps old Sol has the small-pox. Who knows?

☞ At a south of England watering-place the police [illegible]

[illegible] Boston has cruel mothers.

☞ Several elephants were recently lowered into a ship's hold at Calcutta, greatly to their trepidation. All shed tears, and one delicate female elephant actually fainted, and was revived by a couple dozen fans and a bucketful or two of water.

☞ A young man in New York is becoming independently rich by breaking off marriage engagements objectionable to his father, at $100 a time.

☞ Before the sixteenth century ladies used to skewer their dresses with bits of wood; in 1543 a sharp inventor gave them the sekewerity of pins.

☞ Consternation prevails in rural Connecticut, as the foxes are in the habit of spending their evenings courting the fat hens of the worthy farmers.

☞ Musical criticism hoops-da-roos runs in this wise: Miss —— wore a rich purple suit with a handsome sheen of lavender, a white over-garment, tight fitting, with flowing sleeves, and a white bonnet trimmed with the same shades of purple and lavender—*and she sang finely!*

☞ The very slender young man who asked a friend what character he had better assume at the masquerade, and was advised to chalk his head and go as a billiard cue, has decided to braid his legs and appear as a whip-lash.

☞ Market Reports.—Tongue plenty, but going fast; brains scarce, and wanted; cheek, full supply; pluck, market bare; hearts unsteady, price fluctuating, mostly sold for cash on delivery.

☞ The following is the statute in the old Saxon code referring to leap year: "Albeit, as often as leape yearre occurre, the woman holdeth prerogative over the menne in matters of courtshippe, love, and matrimonie so that when the ladye proposeth it shall not be lawful for the manne to say her nae, but shall entertain her proposall in all gude courtesie."

☞ A Washington correspondent writes: "There was a ludicrous incident happened at a concert last week. To the mortification of a young lady attending, her overdress caught on the back of a seat, revealing through the opening an illustrated paper."

☞ A panorama of the Chicago conflagration, styled "Fireopticon," is perambulating Indiana.

☞ A near-sighted youth out West, of a social turn of mind, waved his "rag of distress" at a very pretty young (?) lady; she returned the signal. Imagine his surprise when upon drawing near to his "charmer," he finds the fair maiden to be his mother.

☞ In New York, it is the custom to describe the gas furnished the citizens as "a burning shame."

☞ A youth of San Francisco was robbed recently not only of his watch and money, but of his marriage license, so that his wedding had to be postponed.

☞ It is to wine drinking we owe the origin of the kiss. After Maecenas caught his wife sucking his finest wines through the bung-hole of the barrel with a straw, the custom became general in Rome for the husbands to kiss the lips of their wives, that they might discover the quality of their good ladies' stolen libations; and Cato, the elder, recommends this plan to the serious attention of all careful heads of families.

☞ Junior Clerk.—"Haw! look here, Fipps; I want to be away a month or so." Senior Clerk.—"All right, old fellow. Travel, I suppose." Junior Clerk.—"Haw! no—domestic affliction—some one's going to marry me."

☞ A man who had a scolding wife, being asked what he did for a living, replied that he "kept a hot-house."

☞ Some one lately inquired of a certain Beekman street dealer in card stock what horse power was the engine used for hoisting on his premises. "Horse power be d——d!" said the irate Mr. B., "we hoist by *steam power*."

☞ H. G. says it is wrong to call a "Yaller jacket" an insect, when every school boy knows it's a bird of the Anaconda species.

☞ A Utah correspondent writes: "It is a doctrine of the Mormon church that no woman can get to Heaven without the aid of man, except in very special cases. To be married and a mother in Israel is eternal salvation for the saintess."

☞ It is said that the beginning of all street sweeping dates back to the action of a certain London merchant who attracted a great number of customers to his store by keeping a line of communication open to the other side of the street. Through many months it was the only place where any one could cross the street without sinking into black and unsavory mud, and the merchant's name and business became famous as the result of his shrewd scheme.

A NOBLE ERROR.

BY EDITH S. JAY,

AUTHOR OF "JENNY'S THREE BALLS," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

It was a fine afternoon in May. The flickering sunshine, the fresh breeze outside, were sadly tantalizing certain reluctant captives in Colonel Offham's dining-room—officers of his regiment, the 130th—whom he had summoned to a conference (solemn though unofficial) on a matter that had for days past been darkly whispered about in barracks and town.

Colonel Offham was a bachelor: "Ours" took a wife's place in his heart, and was a Moloch in whose honor every other creature must, if necessary, be sacrificed.

No men were so "smart," no band so scientifically perfect, no officers so thoroughly up in their duties as his; no regiment, hitherto, had been so free from rows or escapades of any kind.

But alas! three days before this afternoon a lamentable accident had threatened the beloved reputation of the regiment with an irremediable rent; and it was to discuss the best means, consistent with justice, of privately patching it up, that the Colonel had assembled the other officers.

He was sitting at the head of the long table where he was wont to entertain them at dinner, a square-built, hard-featured man of fifty-six, with yellow-gray hair cut close to his head, a short, bristly moustache, and small, keen eyes, which looked out now with a stern, half-pathetic perplexity from his weather-empurpled face. He tapped the table mechanically with his broad, muscular hand, as he sat considering, but glanced up in anger if the others spoke or moved about.

There were eight or nine present, but I need only describe one of them,

Seated as far from the Colonel as possible, with his white hands—slender and pretty as a woman's—in continual nervous movement, his red lips quivering beneath the silky, dark moustache, his bright hazel eyes wandering with strained, imploring glances, towards the door, was Julian Verney, second ensign in the 130th.

He was the "good boy" of the regiment, if perfect subordination, meekness under rebuke, and *almost* perfect performance of his duties could make him so; though his brother "subs" were wont to declare (moved, perhaps, by envy) that he lost his temper with *them*, and was disobliging and lazy, as often as any man.

They all, however, religiously admired his good looks, which were exactly in the style which men admire—his soft, regular, mobile features, dark, delicate skin, pencilled eyebrows, and velvety eyes, southern in their sudden changes from passion to languor—heard praise of his physique without envy, and put up good-naturedly with any "airs" which might be supposed to arise from a vanity they considered very excusable.

So Julian had been petted hitherto, and now was indignant because his comrades held aloof, and miserable because one who should have, at least, shared his isolation, seemed inclined to shirk that, and more serious burdens.

Presently a name began to be whispered about. The Colonel, catching it, looked at his watch frowningly, and reddened with anger when he perceived how long he had been waiting for the recalcitrant person.

"Where's Kilmurray?" said a man named Brington at last, to Verney.

Julian started, and the color mounted to his sensitive cheek.

"How should *I* know?" he answered, half defiantly.

"I saw you come out of his quarters before you came here."

"I went—I went to persuade him to come. Poor fellow!" said Verney in an unnatural tone, as if the words were forced out of him.

Persuade! Poor fellow! Phew!" murmured the other, elevating his eyebrows. "Looks as if"—and he stopped.

"Looks queer," observed another, in a rashly audible voice, and incurred a rebuke from the Colonel.

"No prejudging, gentlemen," he growled. "You're here as witnesses: that is all."

"And awfully slow work too," muttered somebody.

"Kilmurray."

At which name the door opened, and Mr. Cecil Kilmurray walked in, cool, erect, lazy, apparently quite unconscious of his offense, or of anything exciting in the object of this meeting.

But as he said, in his deep, steady tones, "Good-afternoon, Colonel," nodded to the others, and smiled a superior smile, half sarcastic half reassuring, upon the agitated Verney, dropped into a chair opposite to him—a very close observer might have detected a shade of ostentation in his calmness, a slight tension of the nostrils and setting of the lips, more significant, perhaps, than all Verney's emotion. He was handsome, in some ways handsomer than Verney—though the 130th did not think so. His features, sharply cut and strongly aquiline, gained in power and expression what they lost in positive beauty, and had a high-bred look which accorded well with his tall figure, too slight for the "lazy, leonine grace," beloved of romantic authoresses, too firmly built, despite a certain careless indolence of movement, for effeminacy. His eyes, dark gray and deep-set, had a peculiarly calm and clear aspect, though their darkness seemed intense, seen in contrast to his fair and pale complexion, and hair and moustache of light brown. His upper lip was a trifle too long; but the smile that curved it, and showed his beautiful teeth, coming gradually: whether, as most often, in satire, or, as rarely—as one or two in grief or need had beheld it—full of kind, pitiful strength, might have redeemed a worse defect. Sarcastic his face certainly was, but not bitter; indolent, but not vacuous; colorless, but by no means insipid or girlish.

It never flushed, wavered, wooed, repelled, in the same instant, like Verney's; but it had a great manliness and quiet to which the other's restless attractiveness never attained, any more than his soft treble voice could be like Kilmurray's deep organ. Though no one would have guessed it, there were only three years between their ages—for Julian was twenty-four; Cecil, or, "Cis," as his comrades called him, twenty-seven. The latter was on pretty good terms with his brother officers, his calmness standing him in the stead of the sweet temper he did not possess, his reserve as yet inoffensive, because he had nothing to hide, but Julian was his particular friend, and they were almost inseparable.

The Colonel, however, did not like him, because he was lazy, sometimes said cool things, and "out of school hours" loftily declined to acknowledge his authority. He bristled up now as he inquired,

"May I ask what kept you so long?"

"I had something to arrange, sir."

"It should have given place, Mr. Kilmurray."

"It could not very well, sir."

"Indeed!"

"That "indeed" was very dubious, and Kilmurray looked across at Julian.

"Could it, old fellow?"

He smiled a curious cold smile as he spoke, and Verney shot back a glance of wondering warning, and answered angrily,

"*I* don't know."

The other's grave eyes widened a little; but he said no more, and leant back in his chair to listen, as the Colonel began to speak.

"I don't want to make a long business of this—it's painful enough already. Upon my soul! I'd rather see half my brave fellows knocked over in battle, than know that one of you had done such a cursed dishonorable thing as I know he must, whoever he is. But it is my duty, commanding this regiment, to bring one to punishment, to save the rest from the slur. And if, as I hope, you've all some feeling for the honor of the old 130th, you will listen to me patiently, and then do your part without caring about private sentiment."

The words came from the Colonel's heart, and as usual in such a case, they carried his hearers with him. A faint murmur of assent ran round the table, and Julian Verney's voice was one of the loudest in it. As to Kilmurray, he laughed and muttered "Touching!" in a languid tone.

"Three days ago—last Monday"—continued Offham, "I was suddenly called out of my study on business in the town, and unexpectedly detained for two or three hours. I left on my desk notes to the amount of £300, which Sergeant Graeme, who, died last week, gave me in charge for his orphan children. When I returned, they were gone—and I searched everywhere in vain. The servants were all out, and did not return so soon as I. There is no back-door to my house, as you know; and the sentry, Johnson (who, besides, has been known to me for twenty years,) has brought witnesses who have proved *he* never left his post; but, as he said, was particularly careful; because he knew my servants were away. There was no open window through which any one could have entered—no entrance, indeed, but the front door; and through that—"

The Colonel paused and looked round, his hard face a little moved and troubled.

"Through that only *two* passed."

He stopped again, and his eyes fell at the expectant glances turned on him—most simply curious, eager, a little sympathizing. But Verney's cheeks flamed, and he trembled visibly, his whole being appearing to hang on Offham's further words, even while his gaze wandered, half in entreaty, half in a sort of passionate, wandering pity, to the face opposite him—Kilmurray's face, which remained the most indifferent there: cool, pale, sneering wearily, with half-shut eyes, at the Colonel's agitation and his comrade's sympathy.

"Those two," said Colonel Offham at last, clearing his throat, and rising from his chair in a solemn, judicial way, "were you, Mr. Kilmurray, and you, Verney."

Verney started violently, the bright blood forsaking his cheeks, leaving them waxen-white, and a groan, half of relief, half of anguish, breaking from him, followed by an involuntary cry, more like a wild throb of entreaty than a mere echo of distress.

"Kilmurray!"

"You young fool!" said Cis, in a low, concentrated tone, and with a stern, warning glance, though his lips smiled. Then he turned aside and whispered to his neighbor Brington, who was staring at him rather doubtfully, "Look at the human father posing the dagger."

Brington exploded, for the simile was too apt—Virginius, in a tight infantry uniform, with face to match its color, tightening his grasp on a paper knife he had snatched up in his agitation, and glaring stern justice at his moustached daughter, Verney, who appeared, indeed, to shrink from the expected doom. He forgot Kilmurray, or he might have seen that his unfaltering lips were as livid as death, his features set like iron, and that his breast was shaken by the strong, unequal throbs of the heart beneath it. He did not see all this, or perhaps he did not think that a man who could be truly guilty of stealing five hundred pounds could make such a good joke, or see the comic side of things at all. So he did not draw away, as one or two were doing, from Verney, at sight of his agony of fear.

"Listen," the Colonel went on. "This *must* be cleared up: but if it can be done quietly, so much the better. The thief must be discovered and punished; but not before the world, for the credit of 'Ours.' So, if either of you, whom I accuse, will confess here, I will beg his brother officers to give me their words as gentlemen not to reveal his disgrace, and will keep it secret myself; only requiring the restoration of the money, if he complies with my conditions. I'll so far wink at a crime against the law—an attempted injury to a brave soldier's helpless orphans—for the sake of the old 130th's good name; and there's no other object on earth I'd do as much for. If the guilty person will not confess, it will be my duty to put the matter into the hands of the police. Now, gentlemen, stand up—speak! Give me your words of honor not to betray whatever you may hear."

All, in turn, complied. Then the Colonel, turning to Verney, who had remained standing (by the aid of his chair only, for his trembling limbs failed beneath him), said:

"Mr. Verney, were *you* the thief?"

He spoke to Verney first, for he believed the latter's terror to be proof positive of guilt; yet his voice wavered huskily as he did so, and he looked away: for Verney had been his favorite of all the 130th, had always seemed so simple-hearted, so eager to please, so pleased at commendation.

He waited patiently for an answer, but none came. Julian stood there trembling, with hoarse sobs for breath, with the perspiration running down his face, which went from white to red every instant; with every nerve quivering in a vain effort for utterance. He had known this was coming before he entered the room; what was to be said, and what answered—he had agreed to it. But he thought of Cis Kilmurray, whose sister he was going to marry—Cis, who had fought for him, and "coached" him, and been licked instead of him when they were at school together, had helped him out of scrapes, and into pleasures since—Cis, whose low, quick breathing *he* could hear plainly enough now, though the others might not—and turning piteously for help to betray him to the very man he was about to betray, he cried, "Oh, Cis, I *can't* say it!"

These words were enough—that appeal. The bystanders understood it. Julian could not clear himself, because of the alternative of ruining his friend.

"Good little Verney!" said one man to Brington.

"Look at Cis," answered he, under his breath.

Kilmurray knew their gaze was upon him, but he cared not a whit for what he had dreaded horribly in prospect, for the present or the future, for Offham's anger, or his comrade's scorn. He only saw two soft hazel eyes fixed upon him, dilated in a childish horror of pain; he only heard Julian's sobs, felt that Julian, now it came to the point, could not endure to be his betrayer, and the knowledge went to his heart—braced, steeled as it was—and almost broke him down. He looked at his friend once more, with a tender, painful smile, and murmured "Poor Ju!" in a caressing voice.

Then he turned to the Colonel, and his softness vanished.

"Don't ask Verney, sir; it's no good," he said carelessly. As *he* won't speak, I'd better, I suppose." He hesitated a moment, cast a long, stern look around that took in every one there, drawing himself to his full height, and fixing his eyes on the Colonel's purple, perplexed face, concluded coolly, "*I* am the thief!" and, laughing a little, sat down.

They stood speechless with wonder, though Verney's silence had in a measure prepared them for this. Kilmurray, who lived on his pay, who would not run into debt ten pounds, who refused an allowance from his father, who had seemed such a miracle of honor and prudence!

Verney, with his face hidden, was crying like a child, Colonel Offham trying to speak his fury, when Kilmurray's cold, languid voice rose once more.

"I sat down prematurely," said he, in a tired way, but without falter or appeal. "That was only my inexperience in melodrama, which Verney there seems quite up in. I repeat, I stole the money, and I'm ready to pay it back, if I can, sir, and agree to your conditions, which I can imagine. But I decline to state why, when, how I took it, and what I did with it; and you are not to question Verney, or I shall be under the necessity of refusing to pay at all. Even the police can't force five hundred pounds out of me, if I have not got it. That's all I have to say. Now, sir, I'm ready."

"Anything so blackguardly cool—" began the Colonel.

But Kilmurray, stroking his moustache, said, in a tone of lazy remonstrance, "Come, I say, that's rather strong!" and a slight murmur arose from the officers.

So Offham continued, more calmly,—

"If I could do as I wished, by Jove, I'd have you taken to the police-office this instant."

"Thank you, sir," interpolated Cis politely.

"But, as that is impossible—"

"Ah, yes! awful luck for the police," said Cis, examining his own white, but sinewy wrist with admiration.

"*Will* you be silent, sir?" growled the Colonel.

"Oh! by all means, sir," replied the sub, composing himself into an easier attitude, and half-closing his eyes.

"These are the conditions," said Colonel Offham, in despair, and feeling if *they* could not conquer the irrepressible Cis, nothing could. "You must send in your papers at once."

"The 130th would be rather too hot to hold me now, sir," remarked Kilmurray; "so, all right."

"You must not enter any other English regiment here or abroad."

"'Come what will, I have been blest; I want no Paradise but rest'—in regard to colonels," murmured Cis, very low.

"You must pay the 500*l.* immediately, by transferring the proceeds of your commission to me."

Kilmurray nodded tranquilly.

"You must not go to the bar, nor take orders; for a man who could—"

"I know—and my hands are tied. So be it, sir."

"You must leave this place at once, and never reside in it again."

"Exactly my own idea."

"Without any farewell visits."

Colonel Offham looked sharply at Cis, and the other men glanced at each other.

"Very well," said Kilmurray, after a slight hesitation, and losing something of his mocking tone.

"And you must give me your father's and mother's address, that I may inform them of the whole case."

"You may write to the governor, if you like," muttered the culprit, throwing himself back in his chair.

"And why not to your mother?" cried Offham, who had borne a great deal at Cecil's hands, and was disposed to resent trifles in consequence.

"Because, luckily for me and her, poor thing! she's where the world's lies can't reach her," said Cis, deliberately. "I didn't think it *was* lucky at the time; but I've changed my mind to-day. One lives and learns."

Brington, who had hitherto pitied his friend, was becoming disgusted at his levity.

"Hadn't *you* better tell your governor, Cis?" he inquired gravely.

"The Colonel will do it much better, my dear fellow."

"I shall give a full account of your insolent manner, and how—"

"Oh, Cis! I forgot your father," cried Verney, suddenly. "He'll be so awfully cut up, so angry, so—"

"Poor old governor!" said Cis, with the first shade of softness he had manifested since Offham had begun his speech. "You must be his son, instead, Ju."

There was a moment's pause. "That's all, isn't it?" asked Kilmurray, getting up from his chair, with an irreverent yawn.

"That is all, Mr. Kilmurray," said Colonel Offham, sternly; "unless you break the agreement."

"I've had quite enough of breaking laws, whether of God's or man's making," said Cis, in a half-weary tone. "You had given me leave before all this, sir, and I suppose I'd better go this evening instead of to-morrow, as I had meant."

"Much better," answered the Colonel, severely.

"Well, I'm off," said Kilmurray, but standing still, with an idea that somebody *must* utter a regret, unable to believe in such sudden unpopularity.

No one did; there was only a vague murmur of "good-by." He had proved so utterly unlike their notion of him, it was harder to forgive than the fault itself. Besides, he would not humiliate himself, even now; he carried his head high as ever, he had not asked by word or look for pity and partisanship, but had laughed at his fault and its results. He saw it, and winced, but made no sign. He saw that Verney—even Verney, for whose sake—well! no matter!—even Verney did not hold out his hand, and wish him God speed: he seemed even anxious for his departure. So, with his head offensively higher than ever, with a grim sneer on his lips, and a careless gesture of farewell, he turned away, saying—

"If any one wants me, they can come to my quarters. Good-by, Julian."

"Good-by," said Verney, in a nervous tone, without looking up; and Kilmurray went out whistling.

"You can go now, gentlemen," said Colonel Offham, after a minute. "Verney, I'm sorry I suspected you. I couldn't help it, you know."

"I don't wonder you did, sir," returned Julian, commanding his voice with difficulty, "when I was such a fool."

"Of course, you felt that man's disgrace. We all do, for the regiment's sake; though as to *him*, I'm afraid he's a scamp."

No voice being raised in contradiction, they all went out.

No reasonable person *could*, in the face of Kilmurray's theft, deny the fact, but (as women are not reputed reasonable) I venture to assert, had a woman been present, she *would* have denied it: it being our glorious peculiarity always to espouse the losing side; and the farther gone, the more we feel inclined to do so. To a woman, a person who is *wronged*, though he may also be wrong, usually seems right; whereas, to a man, a person who is wronged, even if he be *right*, often appears in the wrong.

An hour or so afterwards Captain Brington entered Verney's room, looking rather grave, and also rather foolish.

"I say, Verney," he began, bestriding a chair, "I've been thinking this business over, and I've come to the conclusion we all behaved shabbily to that fellow. It isn't our money, if he *did* steal it."

"Oh, he did," cried Julian. "Who else could?"

"We thought *you*, till he himself said you didn't," returned Brington, dryly. "And, after all, he never did anything else wrong that we know of. Now we treated him as if he were the greatest blackguard on earth; you and I especially, because we were his chums, were horrid sneaks to let him go in that way."

"Well," inquired Verney, impatiently, "*is* he gone?"

"Well?" echoed the other. "No; I'm going to beg his pardon, and tell him I behaved like a brute; and you had best come too, for you were a dozen times worse than I."

"Why?" asked Julian, in a faltering voice. "I don't see that."

"Confound you!" Brington cried, waxing wroth. "Why? To stand shilly-shallying there, when Cis pulled you out of twenty messes, and took your duty, and thought of you even when old Offham was bullying him out of his life, and never tried to put it on you, as he might have done. And you engaged to his sister!"

"You were just as bad."

"He never did anything for me; it was give and take between us. He didn't look back at *me*, to see if I had a kind word or look for him, a dozen times before he got to the door, as I saw him do at you—he didn't. *Are* you coming, or not, Verney?"

"No, I can't," said Julian, with as much decision as he was capable of. "I'm a fool, but those scenes upset me so awfully, I'm fit for nothing afterwards."

"Give me a message, then, or a note—a note. He's an awful idiot about you, for all he's such a cool hand with the rest."

"Oh, here's a note I meant to send him," returned Verney, relieved. "Take care of it, old fellow, it's money."

"Money?" said the other, raising his eyebrows. "All right, I'll give it to him. Then you won't come?"

"No, I said *not*," cried Julian, passionately.

"Oh, *very* well," returned Brington, bounding out of the room, and adding, as he went, "and curse you, for a mean little beast, after all he's done for you."

He walked soberly enough to Kilmurray's quarters, in considerable doubt as to his reception; but determined to be kind. A thought occurred to him as he went, which rather touched him. "There's that little girl at Boyle House, outside the gates, I'm sure he was getting spoony about. There's an end to that, too, now—an end to every thing, poor fellow!"

He was admitted to Kilmurray's presence, and found him sealing a note which he had just written. There was a slight air of surprise and deprecation in his manner, which struck Brington as rather piteous in such a self-contained individual, and made him shake Kilmurray's hand, which was cold and trembled a little, with both his own, and cry very heartily, "Cheer up, old man, the worst is over."

Cecil shrugged his shoulders. "Qui vivra verra," he answered. "What is it?"

"I only came to say I was a sneak to let you go without a word, and I'm awfully sorry—sorry you are going, and for the reason, and everything. Oh, and for that little Ashton girl."

Kilmurray was not confused, neither indifferent, at this allusion. He held out the note he had just been writing, and said quietly, "I was going to ask Verney to take this, but perhaps *you* will, and let the fellows know I wrote it, and tell them not to chaff her about me *now*. I meant to have asked her to marry me, if this hadn't happened."

"Poor Cis," muttered Brington.

"Poor Cis," said that person himself. "He isn't quite so far gone as he thought, since he has *one* friend."

"By Jove! I wish I were a better one," exclaimed Brington energetically.

"Have you seen Ju—Verney?" inquired Kilmurray, with a careless air, taking up a book, and looking at it upside down. "Has he got over his dismay at my sins?"

"I don't know," said Brington grimly. "He sent you this note."

"Poor little boy!" said Cis, in rather a softened tone.

He opened the envelope, stared for a moment unbelievingly at the contents, and then, with a brief exclamation of pain, made as though he would have torn the paper asunder.

He checked himself, however, smiled in a forced way, and slowly resealed the envelope, which he put in the other's hand.

"Give it back to him," he said.

Brington took it, looking the questions he did not like to ask.

"And tell him, money may do a good deal, but it cannot wash stained honor, nor mend broken friendship."

"My dear old fellow!" exclaimed Brington, affectionately laying his hand on Kilmurray's shoulder, touched by the profound bitterness of his deep tones.

"Don't," said Cecil, in a choked voice; "let me brave it out."

Brington considered within himself that it would do no good for Kilmurray to break down now; so he walked to the window, and allowed him time to regain composure. After a little conversation on indifferent subjects, he said he must go.

"But I'll come and see you and your traps off in half an hour, old fellow," he promised, "and perhaps Verney—"

"No," said Cis, shaking his head. "He couldn't stand it."

"I must say I don't comprehend his way of feeling for you."

"I dare say not," said Kilmurray, with a hard laugh.

"Well, good-by," said Brington, and departed.

Not long after Kilmurray came out from his quarters, casting a glance of cool defiance round at a covertly grinning knot of spectators.

"Are you going to your people?" inquired Brington.

"If they will have anything to say to me, which I doubt."

"You don't mean that your father—"

"My governor's awfully strict in his ideas," said Kilmurray, "and I rather think he'll cut me for this affair."

"By Jove! What will you do then?"

"Fill my pockets with coppers, and take a header over one of the bridges."

"Kilmurray! But really?"

"Oh, I shall get on all right," said Kilmurray languidly. "I'm going to give the governor and my little sister a few days' law to get over the shock, and stay at the 'Grosvenor' meanwhile."

"Promise you'll send me a line if I can do you any good."

Cis hesitated, and looked hard and long at his friend.

"I mean it, upon my honor."

"I will then, and thank you. Don't forget that note, old fellow; good-by."

He got into the fly, but put out his hand and head.

"I thank you for your kindness to—a thief," he said, glanced with half sarcasm, half resignation, at the windows of the officers' quarters, and was driven away.

Julian Verney, who had been watching his departure from behind the Venetian blind, threw himself on a chair, with a sob of mingled relief and self-reproach. For some days the impression of his friend's disgrace wrought on him so strongly it made him feverish and restless, mentally and physically. He shunned the others, winced at every allusion to Kilmurray; but when the subject was forced upon him, at once strongly asserted and passionately defended his offence.

The Colonel looked at his haggard face and bright portuled eyes with kind anxiety, and offered him leave; but he declined it till, a week after the day, a long letter from his betrothed (Kilmurray's sister) altered his intention, and he left the barracks and unpleasant associations behind, with the versatility of his nature, and went to town.

Part of this letter must be quoted, though it is somewhat anticipatory to do so.

"BLANCHE KILMURRAY TO JULIAN VERNEY.

* * * * * * *

"I must now tell you, dearest Julian, of something which frightened and made me very unhappy. I told you of the dreadful letter papa received from your Colonel, announcing poor Cecil's fault and disgrace, and how papa forbade me ever to see him or utter his name again, and told the servants to shut the door in his face if he tried to come in. Papa was even so angry he would not write to say so, nor let me. Well, every knock at the door startled me, lest it should be my brother: and at last, yesterday, as I was watering my flowers at the window, a cab with some luggage drew up, and he got out. I could see him, though he could not see me. He was dreadfully pale, and had that miserable look in his eyes I never saw there but once before, after dear mamma's death: but he was quiet and lazy, as you know he always is, however much he feels; and (though I am sure he expected to be turned away from the door) I heard him say, 'My father at home, or Miss Blanche?' in quite a matter-of-course tone. The butler answered, 'Mr. Kilmurray told me to say he was not at home to *you*, sir.' 'When?' asked Cecil, still quietly. 'A week ago; he said I wasn't never to let you in again, sir,' 'Oh, very well,' said Cis, 'but I can see my sister, I suppose?' 'No, Mr. Cecil; master said not.' 'Nonsense, you've made a mistake!' 'No, indeed, sir.' 'All right, then, I'll leave my card.' And he pulled one out, trying to smile; but in such a bitter way I couldn't bear it.

"I disobeyed papa for the first time in my life; I ran down and called to Cecil, 'Cis, dear, I can't stay, but I'll try and pursuade papa to forgive you.' He came into the hall and kissed me. 'You've heard the story, Blanchie?' he asked. 'Oh yes—oh why, why did you do it?' I answered. 'My only wonder is I didn't do it before—every one seems to take to the idea so naturally,' he said. 'No matter. Be a good wife to Verney, and keep him straight, and look after the governor; he isn't so young as he was, and he's only got one child now. I shan't be at your wedding, Blanchie, so here is my present now.' And he took that big sapphire ring he always wears off his finger and gave it to me. 'Where are you going?' I asked, getting frightened. He shrugged his shoulders and did not answer; but said in a minute, 'Don't tease Julian about this affair, or let him speak of it to my father. Tell both of them they needn't be afraid of my ever turning up again. Don't cry, you little goose—kiss me—good-by, God bless you.' He laughed, nodded to the butler, and went away in the cab, seeming quite cheerful; but oh! Julian, there was a sort of despair in his voice when he said 'don't cry,' that I can't bear to think of. On the card he left was pencilled 'P. P. C.'

"My father was very angry when he heard I had seen Cecil, and made me promise never to do so again, nor write to him again, so I must not. I cried all last night, thinking of how wrong and unhappy poor Cis was, and such a contrast to *you*."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FASHIONABLE PARTIES.

Any moderately intelligent savage must look with wonder upon the scene presented at the supper table at our fashionable parties—the rush, the scramble, the fierce fight for access to the table; the curious spectacle presented of dozens of male arms raised high in air above the mob, bearing trophies of success, vinous and edible; the fierce jostling by which the elevated glasses and plates—the champagne, chicken salad and terrapin soup come down upon the unlucky heads below; the screams of the women whose dresses are ruined; the objurations of their attendant cavaliers—all this is calculated to strike the stranger to our vaunted modern civilization with astonishment. In the scant space allowable for dancing at our fashionable parties, the destruction to dresses and female temper is also nearly as great as in the supper room. So long as parties are given on so large a scale, it is not easy to see how the supper table difficulty can be remedied unless through some such agency as Marini's proposed structure, containing a spacious ball-room, with fitting supper-room, dressing-rooms, saloons, &c. Doubtless, a handsome, well-arranged building of this sort would supply what is wanted by those who give parties on a large scale, saving the loss and waste, the destruction of dresses, carpets, furniture, &c., inseparable from these jams in private houses. At any rate, an improvement in this direction is needed, and we trust that some one will undertake it.—*Washington Star.*

☞ There is a rooster in Brooklyn that can run the crow-matic scale.

☞ Mrs. Updyke, of Unadilla, New York, came to her death last week through tight lacing. She ran up stairs rapidly and fell dead on the top step, through the breaking of a compressed blood-vessel. She had been married but two days.

☞ A nod fellow—Morpheus.

☞ A watch word—Tick.

☞ Many hard-ships.—A fleet of iron-sides.

☞ "Mother," said a little boy, "I've got a bad headache and a sore throat, too." "Well, you shall have some medicine," said the mother. "It's no matter," retorted the shrewd urchin, "I've got 'em—but they don't hurt me."

☞ Burglar-proof pocket-books attached to the finger by a chain and ring, are out. Wish some one would invent a self-filling pocket-book.

☞ A few minutes' devotion at night will not clear the conscience of a foul trick done during the day, nor will going to church on Sunday atone for the wilful sins of a week.

☞ A Georgia correspondent says that the most noticeable comment on the bill giving a wife a cause of action against a party selling liquor or anything else to her husband while drunk, and allowing the proceeds of the fine to go to the wife, came from Whit Anderson, the messenger of the Senate. "Now," said Whit, "I can afford to get married, for my wife can comfortably support the family on the fines I will bring her."

☞ An extraordinary desecration of the dead has just been discovered at Lyons. A watchman at the La Guillotiere Cemetery, named Tabarel, appears to have for a long time past been in the habit of violating at night the tombs of females, to cut off their hair, which he sold for making chignons. The crime was discovered accidentally by a cat drawing some tresses from a hole in which he had concealed them.

☞ A letter was recently received at the post-office directed "in caer of the sitty Sivil injineer."

☞ A vagrant dog is reported in Hardin county, Ky., which has been hung eight times, but is not dead yet, and lives to plague the farmers.

☞ Texas has an artesian well which spouts soda-water. Flavoring extra.

Yeas and Neighs.

If horses could make themselves understood in human language, they would signify by an universal "Yea," their assent to the statement that the MUSTANG LINIMENT is the best remedy extant for all these external ailments, and by a most emphatic "Neigh!" show their displeasure at every attempt to use any other preparation in its stead. Ever since its introduction at St. Louis, at the close of the Mexican War in 1849, it has proved a signal blessing to horse and man—curing, with absolute certainty and wonderful despatch, such equine diseases as spavin, ringbone, poll evil, scratches, hoofsale, &c., and relieving and finally removing the painful affections which attack the muscles, sinews, and external glands of human beings. It is a fact beyond contradiction, that for all injuries or complaints of man or quadrupeds to which an external remedy is applicable, the MUSTANG LINIMENT is preferable to every other.

PROSPECTUS FOR 1872.

THE LADY'S FRIEND.

REDUCTION OF PRICE!

SPLENDID STORIES.

The publishers of THE LADY'S FRIEND have concluded to reduce its price to single subscribers from $2.50 to $2—the prices to Clubs (already very low) remaining the same.

They shall continue to obtain for their readers the very best novelets, stories, poetry, etc., that can be procured, including articles from the gifted pens of Miss Amanda M. Douglas, Miss A. L. Muzzey, Daisy Ventnor, August Bell, Mrs. Margaret Hosmer, A. M. Dana, Madge Carroll, Emma B. Ripley, Nora Perry, M. C. Pyle, Ida Rowland, etc., etc., etc.

The following novelets, with the usual variety of short stories, are announced for 1872:

WITHIN THE MAZE;

OR,

LADY ANDINNIAN'S TRIAL.

By MRS. HENRY WOOD, author of "East Lynne," "Dene Hollow," &c.

UNA AND HER LIONS.
By MISS A. L. MUZZEY, author of "One Woman's Experience," "Jealousy," etc.

QUEEN COQUETTA.
By DAISY VENTNOR, author of "Prince Charming, etc., etc.

ONLY A WISH.
By A. M. DANA, author of "Jarring Chords, etc., etc.

MISSION WORK.
By Mrs. MARGARET HOSMER, author of "A Turn in Fortune's Wheel," etc., etc.

AN EVERY-DAY HEROINE.
By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS, author of "Solid Silver," "A Little Money," etc.

ENGRAVINGS!

The Engravings of THE LADY'S FRIEND are of a very superior character. They embrace beautiful pictures of subjects which touch the sentiments and affections, illustrations of our Novelets and Stories, illustrations of the Fashions, (including cuts from which patterns for almost everything can be ordered at a low price,) illustrations of Ladies' Fancy work, etc.

MUSIC.

A piece of the latest and most fashionable Music accompanies every number. The Music is of itself worth the price of the magazine.

The Most Refined, Beautiful, and Interesting of the Magazines!

In short, THE LADY'S FRIEND aims to be, and its proprietors think it is, the most refined, Beautiful, and Interesting of the Magazines—*being in Cover, Engravings, and Contents just what a lady's magazine should be.*

TERMS—Always in Advance.

One Copy, - - - - - $2.00.
1 Copy of the Lady's Friend ($2) and 1 of The Saturday Evening Post ($2.50), for $4.00.

[Our club terms are the same as those of that old and popular paper, THE SATURDAY EVENING POST—in order that the clubs may be made up of the magazine and paper conjointly when so desired.]

☞ The magazines or papers in a club will be sent to different Post-offices, if desired.

☞ The contents of THE LADY'S FRIEND and of THE POST will always be entirely different.

☞ Subscribers in British North America must remit *twelve cents extra*, as we have to prepay the U. S. postage.

☞ Remittances should be made, if possible, in Post-office Orders, or in Drafts or Checks, *payable to our order.*

Address DEACON & PETERSON,
319 *Walnut Street, Philadelphia.*

Single Numbers 20 Cts. Specimen Copies (not current numbers) 15 Cts.

R. R. R.

RADWAY'S READY RELIEF

Cures the worst pains in from one to twenty minutes. Not one hour after reading this advertisement need any one suffer with pain. **Radway's Ready Relief** is a cure for every pain. It was the first and is the only pain remedy that instantly stops the most excruciating Pains, allays Inflammation, and cures Congestions, whether of the Lungs, Stomach, Bowels, or other glands or organs, by one application, in from one to twenty minutes, no matter how violent or excruciating the pain, the Rheumatic, Bed-ridden, Infirm, Crippled, Nervous, Neuralgic, or prostrated with disease, may suffer. Price 50 cents.

DR. RADWAY'S
Perfect Purgative Pills.

Perfectly tasteless, elegantly coated, for the cure of all disorders of the Stomach, Liver, Bowels, Kidneys, Bladder, Nervous Diseases, Headache, Constipation, Costiveness, Indigestion, Dyspepsia, Biliousness, Bilious Fever, Inflammation of the Bowels, Piles, and all derangements, of the Internal Viscera. Warranted to effect a Positive Cure.

Price 25 cents per box. Sold by Druggists.

DR. RADWAY & CO.,
67 Maiden Lane, New York.

ap29-tf

Sinking Slowly.

Diseases that progress rapidly to a crisis are not the only ones to be dreaded. Canker or dry rot does not blast a tree as suddenly as a stroke of lightning, but unless arrested it destroys it as certainly and in like manner chronic debility, although it does not kill with the swiftness of yellow fever, is as sure to sap the springs of life eventually as any acute disease, if not checked by invigorating medication. There is something inexpressibly touching in the spectacle of premature decay. Languor, pallor, emaciation, depression of spirits, and a distaste for exertion, are its ordinary symptoms, and they should be promptly met by tonic treatment. The best invigorant and exhilirant that can be administered in a case of this kind is HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS. The stimulating principle of the preparation rouses the dormant energies of the system, and the strengthening and regulating properties give a permanent and healthful impulse to the vital forces thus brought into play. The failing appetite is reawakened, the process of digestion and assimilation are quickened, the quality of the blood is improved, the secretions become more natural, and every organ that contributes to the nourishment of the body undergoes salutary change. By these means the repair of the physical structure is effected and its health and vigor restored. In no class of diseases has the beneficent operation of the BITTERS been more marked and striking than in those characterized by general debility and nervous prostration. Ladies affected by these ailments find in this most wholesome of all tonics and correctives the safest and surest means of relief. It is strong to restore and powerless to injure. Such is the uniform testimony of "clouds of witnesses." feb3-1m

DR. S. S. FITCH

sends his **"Family Physician"** 80 pages, free by mail to any one. This book is to make any one their own doctor. Remedies are given for Thirty Diseases, which each person can prepare.

Send your direction to Dr. S. S. FITCH & SON, 714 Broadway, New York. may.3-1y

Hurnett's Cocoaine dresses the hair perfectly, without greasing, drying or stiffening it.

☞ In the funeral procession of Wong-Haug-Soon, a wealthy Chinaman of San Francisco, a few days ago, there were five express wagons full of roasted pigs and chickens, to be deposited with the corpse in the sepulchre. This is an extraordinary custom, and even surpasses the old Greek custom of providing the corpse with a obolus of money to pay old Charon's ferriage.

OUR NEW DEPARTURE!

THE

SATURDAY EVENING POST.

HALF A CENTURY OLD.

ENTIRELY NEUTRAL IN POLITICS

That well-known literary weekly, THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, having just completed its half-a-century of existence, has resolved to celebrate the event by

A NEW DEPARTURE.

The size of THE POST has therefore been enlarged fully one-third, (containing 48 long columns,) and it is now both the

Largest and Cheapest of the Family Papers!

It will contain Novelets, Illustrated Stories, Sketches, Poetry, Answers to Correspondents, etc., etc., by the

ABLEST WRITERS

that can be procured—including Mrs. Henry Wood, author of "East Lynne," Mrs. Margaret Hosmer, Amanda M. Douglas, Burr Thornbury, Ella Wheeler, August Bell, Clio Stanley, Captain Carnes, Lillie Devereux Blake, "Zig," Mrs. Fanny B. Feudge, Mrs. M. L. S. Burke, Eben E. Rexford, etc., etc., etc. ☞ It will be entirely NEUTRAL in politics.

NEW NOVELETS CONSTANTLY PUBLISHED.

New Novelets and Stories, long and short, are being continually published. Subscriptions, therefore, can begin at almost any time.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

As our enlarged paper will afford us the room, we shall devote about a column in every number to a summary of the most important and interesting news of the week.

TERMS—Always in Advance.

One Copy, - - - $2.50.
One Copy of the Saturday Evening Post ($2.50) and One of the Lady's Friend ($2,00), for $4.00.

Our *club* terms are the same as those of that beautiful magazine, THE LADY'S FRIEND—in order that the clubs may be made up of the paper and magazine conjointly when so desired—and are as follows:

4 copies,	-	-	-	-	-	$6.00
8 "	(and one to getter-up of club,)					12.00
14 "	do.	do.	do.	do.		20.00
20 "	do.	do.	do.	do.		28.00
50 "	do.	do.	do.	do.		65.00

☞ Subscribers in British North America must remit *twenty cents extra*, as we have to prepay the U. S. postage.

☞ The papers or magazines in a club will be sent to different Post-offices, if desired.

☞ The contents of THE POST and of THE LADY'S FRIEND will always be entirely different.

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Address H. PETERSON & CO.,
319 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.
SINGLE COPIES 6 Cents.

THE

SATURDAY EVENING POST.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, FEB. 10, 1872.

BACK NUMBERS.

We have still on hand back numbers to the first of the year, containing the early chapters of "The Swamp Outlaws," &c.

GIRLS, DON'T TALK SLANG.

Girls, don't talk slang! If it is necessary that any one in the family should do that, let it be your big brother, though I would advise him not to adopt "pigeon English," when there is an elegant, systematized language that he can just as well use. But don't you do it. You have no idea how it sounds to ears unused or averse to it, to hear a young lady, when she is asked if she will go with you to some place, answer, "Not much:" or, if requested to do something she does not wish, to hear her say, "Can't see it!"

Not long ago, I heard a young miss, who is educated and accomplished, in speaking of a young man, say that she intended to "go for him!" and when her sister asked her assistance at some work, she answered, "Not for Joe!"

Now, young ladies of unexceptionable character and really good education, fall into this habit, thinking it shows smartness to answer back in slang phrases, and they soon slip flippantly from their tongues, with saucy pertness that is neither ladylike nor becoming. "I bet," or "you bet," may be well enough among men who are trading horses or land; but the contrast is startling and positively shocking when a young man is holding the hand of his lady-love to hear those words issue from her lips. They seem at once to surround her with the rougher association of his daily life, and bring her down from the pedestal of her purity, whereon he had placed her, to his own coarse level.

I know the bright-eyed girl who reads this will think the matter over, and do what is right, and discard slang and unladylike phrases.

GOOD RULES FOR YOUNG MEN.—"Whatever I have tried to do in life," said Charles Dickens, "I have tried with all my heart to do well. What I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely. Never to put one hand to anything on which I would throw my whole self, and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was, I find now to have been golden rules."

☞ A young woman only needs one lover very much in earnest to bring around her several others equally devoted, as men are sometimes like sheep, and all follow where one leads.

SONNET.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

The whole round of the year is crammed—is built
With beauty, but so few have eyes to see
Its light in all the vast variety
Of appearance. Only at times when there is spilt
Light down upon their roots some showy birth
Of nature—moonlit sea—or sunset when
'Tis rich with cloudlets—are the great levels of men
Made conscious of this element on earth.
The seasons' common, unobtrusive phases,
The gentle days which die in temperate light,
The multitudes of mornings which spring raises,
Far sweeter that they do not 'maze the sight,
Move regularly onward year by year
Past souls unconscious of the wealth they bear.

RUPERT.

EARTH-SICKNESS.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

I have always been peculiarly subject to sea-sickness. When I was going abroad, and all the wonders of the continent were dazzling my imagination, I used to lie in my berth scarcely able to stir, wilted and worthless. I knew there were ten days between New York and Liverpool; and I used to say to myself, "Well, are you willing to take these ten days of nausea and universal disgust for the sake of the three months of exquisite joy which you are going to have on the Continent?" I never was so sea-sick but that I was deliberately willing to pay the price. I said, "This is about as bad as anything can well be in this world; but for the sake of that which is beyond it, I will take even this." Returning, we had a passage of seventeen days. We came with a water-logged steamship. She was loaded down deeper, by many feet, than she should have been. It was stormy from shore to shore, without a single fair day. But the place to which we were going was my home; there was my family; there was my church; there were my friends, who were as dear to me as my own life. And I lay perfectly happy in the midst of sickness and nausea. All that the boat could do to me could not keep down the exultation and joy which rose up in me. For every single hour was carrying me nearer and nearer to the spot where was all that I loved in the world. It was deep, dark midnight when we ran into Halifax. I could see nothing. Yet, the moment we came into still water, I rose from my berth and got up on deck. And, as I sat near the smokestack, while they were unloading the cargo upon the wharf, I saw the shadow of a person apparently going backward and forward near me. At last the thought occurred to me, "Am I watched?" Just then the person addressed me, saying:

"Is this Mr. Beecher?"

"It is," I replied.

"I have a telegram for you from your wife."

I had not realized that I had struck the continent where my family were. There, in the middle of the night, and in darkness, the intelligence that I had a telegram from home—I cannot tell you what a thrill it sent through me.

We are all sailing home; and, by-and-by, when we are not thinking of it, some shadowy thing (men call it death), at midnight, will pass by, and will call us by name, and will say: "I have a message for you from home. God waits for you." It is but a handbreadth. And on the stormy sea there are *men* who stop and think of discomforts when home and heart are calling for them.

GO HOME, BOYS!

Boys, *don't hang round the corners of the streets.* If you have anything to do, do it promptly, right off, then go home. Home is the place for boys. About the street corners, and at the stables, they learn to talk slang, and they learn to swear, to smoke tobacco, and to do many other things which they ought not to do.

Do your business, and then *go home.* If your business is play, play, and make a business of it. I like to see boys play good, earnest, healthy games. If I were the town, I would give the boys a good, spacious playground. It should have plenty of soft green grass, and trees, and fountains, and broad space, to run and jump, and to play suitable games. I would make it as pleasant, as lovely as it could be, and I would give it to the boys to play in, and when the play was ended I would tell them to Go HOME!

BEWARE OF FOWDER—A HINT TO LOVERS.

A good story is told of a young lady and a gentleman at a fashionable party in Nashville. The young man was handsome and happy; the young lady arrayed in all the exquisite taste of lavender, rose, etc., with gold powdered hair flowing over her swan-like neck. Finding the heat of the room too much for them, they sought the cool shade of an arbor where they might listen to the fountain's fall. The music rose and fell, time flew on silver pinions, and after an absence of at least an hour ou young friends entered the brilliantly illuminated parlors. The lady passed on in the dance, but the young man was slightly taken aback by his next neighbor informing him that round his neck was the unmistakable print of two arms, all in chalk and diamond dust, on one shoulder a large pile of yellow powder, and on his upper lip and cheek diamond dust, bloom of youth, and yellow powder, mixed up generally. The young lady's hair was observed to be several shades paler. Moral.—Carry a dusting-broom in your pocket, or kiss, but take care it don't tell.

SELLING WIVES.

Women, now-a-days, have a choice of husbands, but in former times they were sold like slaves or cattle.

It was the custom in Babylon, five hundred years before the Christian era, to have an annual auction of the unmarried ladies. In every year, on a certain day, each district assembled all its virgins of marriageable age. The most beautiful was put up first, and the man who paid the highest gained possession of her. The second in personal charms followed her, and so on, that the bidders might gratify themselves with handsome wives according to the length of their purses.

When all the comely ones were sold, the crier ordered the most deformed one to stand up, and after demanding who would marry her for a small sum, she was adjudged to him who was satisfied with the least; and thus the money raised from the sale of the handsome served as a portion to those who either were of disagreeable looks, or had any other imperfections.

THE FASHIONS.

The London Advertiser says: Women are now wearing high heels to their boots and piles of sham hair. Their aim is size. So complains a cotemporary through one or two columns. But why does lovely woman, who thus adds cubits to her stature, counteract herself by stooping to folly? A lady of five feet becomes, say, five feet two inches per heels, five feet six inches per hair, five feet again per Grecian bend. The affectation of a commanding figure is neutralized by the affectation of an arching back. Maria Agnesi invented a mathematical curve called the witch; but the Grecian bend is not worthy of Euclid. Arithmetic is enough to prove that to bend a few inches, however fashionable and artistic, is as suicidal as it is unlovely.

☞ The worst rum-holes are men's mouths.

GOSSIP FOR LADIES.

THE CITY FASHIONS.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

DEAR POST: Among the pretty fancies that have come in with the winter months, is the fashion of attaching tiny golden chains to the belt, which, depending from the left side, are used for a variety of purposes.

There was a time when a similar style was sacred to housekeepers, and when the chain, together with an enormous bunch of keys, supposed to belong to the cellars and pantries as well as to the strong room where the family plate was deposited, was a badge of office and a certificate of character. But this has changed, and pretty belles now make of it a useful ornament.

Everywhere we see them; on the promenade, at church, balls, concerts, and operas; and everywhere they seem to come under the head of indispensables. If Miss is out for a stroll, it is not impossible for her, without the aid of charms, to carry her little Guanaco umbrella, her muff, and the tiny satchel that answers for handkerchief and stamps, and on reaching a muddy crossing she might even then manage somehow to lift the trailing skirt that in language mute but eloquent begs to be taken up and cared for. She might, I say, do all this, and more, for ladies are rich in expedients, but where is the use, when by adopting the "latest sensation" she can sail along under all these disadvantages as free and independent as a wood-sawyer. I allude to the little chains. They are not long enough to be troublesome, and are securely fastened to the belt which sometimes comes with them, and is of finest gold, studded with gems. It isn't thrown in "free, gratis, for nothing"—on the contrary, a small fortune is expected in return for one. At the ends of the chains are patent hooks, which are probably about the most secure little things ever invented, holding on to whatever is entrusted to them like a poor widow to a rich suitor. The little hand-satchel has the first chain, as it is supposed to be most frequently consulted; another holds the umbrella, and is placed far enough back not to interfere with the locomotion; while the third chain is attached to the muff, that the pretty promenader may drop it at will, and have both hands free to lift the dainty silk when the crossing is too wet or a careless masculine sets his elephantine foot upon it.

There used to be a good deal said about coquettes wearing their lover's scalps at their belts, and if they did it now these chains would be just the things to suspend them from. But there is no fear of any such savage exhibition; a modern coquette wouldn't be in possession of her lover's scalp fifteen minutes before she would be off to her favorite hairdresser to know if it couldn't be done over into an elegant "crown braid," or a pair of "frizettes."

In the ball-room these chains hold the handkerchief, fan, bouquet, and order of dancing; at the opera, the vinaigrette, fan, and opera-glasses; at church, the prayer-book and muff. It is a useful little fashion, and a pretty, and is being generally adopted; and unless it becomes so common as to be vulgar, it will prove quite a blessing to the female world, who, owing to the meagre supply of pockets in their costumes, have all their lives been running around with hands full, and in constant fear of losing some one of the pretty trifles that fashion requires they should always have about them.

But let us drop that subject before it has enchained us, and talk about

MORNING WRAPPERS.

What a world of good, solid comfort that name suggests, doesn't it? So much more cozy than "breakfast robe" I think. They may be made of the same material, and cut and trimmed exactly to match, and yet "in my mind's eye, Horatio," I see a wide difference between the former and the latter. I don't know why, but in the term "breakfast robe" one gets an idea of something rich and stilted, and costly and fashionable; while "morning wrapper" implies a garment one can throw oneself on the lounge in, tuck up the slippered feet in the superfluous length, and then read and drowse and dream, regardless alike of wrinkles and dust, and be perfectly happy in it, until something disagreeable comes along.

To my idea, a simple-shaped sacque-wrapper is the most comfortable for morning negligé. It is merely a loose sacque, the fronts without darts and the back loosely fitted. The Spanish flounce looks pretty with it, and to add this the skirt should be cut off at the knee, and finished to the proper length with a scantily-pleated flounce. You can *gather* it, if you think you would like it better, and if you choose you can cut your skirt full length, and set the flounce on the outside, but you will find this makes the dress heavy, and you will be sorry you didn't do it the other way.

Pressed flannel, in broken plaids, is the favorite material at this season; it comes in blue and white, black and white, scarlet and white, and in other combination of color. For calico, and the pretty percales and cambrics, this is also a good model. In making the Spanish flounce for these goods, the material should be cut exactly on the bias, especially if it is striped, and you want a pretty effect, which of course you do if you are a woman. A three-inch hem should finish the bottom of the flounce, and a narrow one the top; gather it an inch from the edge, without a cord, and stitch it on with the machine, if you have one; if not, take it to your friend who has, and let her do it—while you hold the baby. If it is of high-priced material, (the *wrapper*, not the baby,) and you wish to look dressed, you can add a jaunty little black silk overskirt and a Russia leather belt; and if you are married, and superintend the domestic hive, you could get one of those chains mentioned above and hang a bunch of keys to it; this would give you an air of importance, and give other people an idea that you looked after things carefully. Of course you needn't do it; it would not affect the appearance, you know, if you couldn't tell the cellar from the garret, or the sweetmeat closet from the coal-bin, but it would *look* like housekeeping—and in this day of deception the more of a humbug you are the more friends and admirers you will have. I don't mean by that, that it would be better to know nothing of housekeeping. In my humble opinion, a housekeeper gets along better, and so does the house, if she occasionally looks around, and asks a question or so; besides, when a woman voluntarily puts her neck in the hymenial noose, and accepts the situation of head clerk in an establishment, she assumes a responsibility that she has no right to neglect; and if there is dust on the hall table, and a general air of unconcern all over the house, duty and religion hold her accountable. Still, as I remarked before, if you don't know anything of housekeeping, and don't mean to, it won't do any hurt to jingle keys.

AS TO TRIMMINGS,

lace is taking the place of needlework and ruffles again; it is not a bad idea either, for there is twice the wear in it, for lingerie of any kind, and an airy grace that nothing else can approach. Hamburg edgings and insertings have had their day, and for a time, at least, will be but little used.

NECK-TIES

are an institution in the land now, and art and ingenuity are constantly contriving some pretty surprise for fashion's worshippers. Combinations of lace and silk is the latest caprice, and about the prettiest yet seen. The lovely Roman ties are quite as fashionable as ever, and are imported in beautiful textures and designs. "True Lover's Knots" are worn by the young; these are made of twilled silk, the edge finished with Valenciennes lace, the ends falling over an oval piece of Swiss muslin trimmed to correspond. These are not as pretty, however, as the simple tie passed under the collar, and tied in a natural double bow at the throat.

There are several other little matters of which I intended to speak, but time presses and I must hasten to say

Au revoir.
OLIVE KING.

DEAD IN THE SIERRAS.

BY JOAQUIN MILLER.

His footprints have failed us—
Where berries are red,
And madrones are ranked,
The hunter is dead!

The grizzly may pass
By his half-open door;
May pass and repass
On his path, as of yore;

The panther may crouch
In the leaves on his limb;
May scream and may scream—
It is nothing to him.

Prone, bearded, and breasted
Like column of stone;
And tall as a pine—
As a pine overthrown!

His camp-fire gone,
What else can be done,
Than let him sleep on
Till the light of the sun?

Aye, tombless! What of it?
Marble is dust,
Cold and repellant;
And iron is rust.

—*Overland Monthly.*

THE LOST HAT.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY LETTICE THORPE.

Frank Thornton was standing upon the deck of a St. Lawrence steamer, enjoying the lovely view of wooded island and shining water, when a sudden gust of wind lifted his broad straw hat from off the rich brown locks which it shielded, and sent it flying down the river.

"That is the last of my new hat," he exclaimed, looking dolefully after it, as the hot sun poured down upon his unprotected head. "Fortunately I have another in my trunk," and he disappeared to procure the desired covering. He was a young man of twenty-four or five years, handsome, dashing, and possessing eyes that absolutely danced with mirth and mischief. He had a great fondness for fishing excursions, and was now enjoying a few weeks' respite from business, intending to pursue his favorite sport at Alexandria Bay, which place he reached some time before noon.

A few moments after this accident happened to young Thornton, a gay boating party came rowing along from one of the islands.

"See there!" exclaimed a sweet, girlish voice, "that is a gentleman's straw hat, and I am going to fish it up," which she succeeded in doing, after some few ineffectual attempts. "Oh, what a pretty clasp!" she said, examining it curiously. "Some lady-love has fastened this here with her own fair fingers. How badly the poor fellow that lost it will feel. I am going to put it on my head now, and take this nonsensical little turban off," which she accordingly did, after shaking the straw quite vigorously with her white hands.

"If the gentleman could only see you, little sis," cried a young man beside her, "I am sure that he would insist upon your keeping his hat. It is wonderfully becoming, my dear."

"It will protect my lovely complexion anyway," was the laughing response, and they pursued their tranquil course.

After partaking of a very good dinner, and having indulged in a refreshing sleep, Frank Thornton sauntered out with a friend into a small grove near the hotel. They were talking together in a merry, bantering way, after the manner of young men generally, when Frank came to a sudden stop. "Look there, Sherwood!" he cried. "A veritable wood nymph! And with my lost hat on, by all that's wonderful. Where do you suppose she found it?"

"The wind must have blown it from off your head on to hers; that is, if it be really your hat. How do you know it?"

"By the clasp. Sister Laura fastened the ribbon with a little pin she had when a child. I cannot be mistaken."

"Here is an adventure with the prettiest heroine in the world."

"I shall claim my right, Sherwood."

"What do you mean, Frank?"

"Mean, boy! Have my rightful kiss, that's all."

"You would not *dare* to do it."

"Wouldn't I? After ten years' intimate acquaintance with me, do you still doubt my courage?"

"*Impudence*, you had better say."

"Well, call it anything you please, only speak a little lower. Do you think that any man of my age, with the spirit of a kitten, would look at such a face as that, beneath his own identical straw hat, and not claim what rightfully belongs to him from her sweet red lips?"

"Is it not taking rather ungenerous advantage?"

"Oh, I will give it right back again if she says so. Now, keep perfectly quiet if you love me."

The young girl, evidently not more than seventeen or eighteen years of age, was seated upon a carpet of green moss, talking gayly with another young lady, who seemed a few years her senior. She was very fair, with the bluest eyes and roniest cheeks imaginable, and with long brown curls, over which was placed the straw hat that seemed destined to play a conspicuous part in her future history. She was talking very fast, and suddenly throwing back her head with a ringing laugh, Frank, who had stolen noiselessly up behind them, leaned over her and left an audacious kiss right upon her open, dewy lips. With a frightened scream she sprang up, and followed more leisurely by her half-laughing friend, she ran as fast as her pretty feet could carry her towards the hotel. The hat having fallen off a few moments after she started, the bold young man picked it up and put it on his own head again. Then following in her footsteps, he felt sure as he glanced up at the green blinds of an upper window that he saw the same pair of bright blue eyes peeping down at him. And indeed he was not mistaken, for the young girl was determined to see what kind of a creature had dared to kiss her. She felt a little more reconciled when she saw how very handsome a young gentleman it proved to be, for of course she understood it all when she saw the "hateful hat" upon his head.

In a few moments her friend entered the room, and throwing herself into a chair, gave free vent to the laughter she had been repressing.

"Oh, Minny," she cried at last, "I never saw anything so funny in my life. How you did scream."

"Very funny, I have no doubt, for *you*. Perhaps you would not have thought it so dreadfully funny if it had been yourself."

"Why, he didn't hurt you, did he?"

"Bell, if you don't stop I'll throw this cushion at you. I never knew anything so impudent."

"Yes, but you are in love with him now, I know it. You were just peeping through the blinds at him."

"In love with him, indeed! I shall make Harry take me right away from here. I will not stay where I have got to be kissed, whether I say yes or no."

"Oh! no, Minny, don't. I cannot bear to leave these lovely islands yet, and you may not see that dreadful man again. But here comes Harry," she said, as a pleasant-looking young man entered the room.

"So, Miss Minny," he cried, laughingly, "you got kissed, did you? So much for confiscating gentlemen's hats, young lady."

"How do you know that I was kissed? Who told you?"

"The rascal himself told me, to be sure. He made full confession and apology. He brought the matter right home to myself, and asked me if I would not have done the same, in his place."

"And what did you say, sir? I would like to know," interrupted Bell, with suspicious eagerness.

"O, I said that, being no longer my own master, I could not indulge in any such little gallantries, of course."

"Harry," pleaded Minny, "won't you take me away in the early boat, to-morrow?"

"Why, I cannot do that, dear, for I have promised Thornton to go fishing with him. He has engaged a fine little sail-boat, and is very anxious for the society of you two young ladies."

"*I* shall not go one step, then. Of course, Bell can do as she pleases."

"Pshaw! Minny, you *will* go, too. There is no need of being dignified. If you put a man's hat on your head, you must expect that he will kiss you, as a matter of course, unless you can manage to make yourself a little less pretty."

"I shall *not* go, Harry, so you may make up your mind to that."

And she kept her word, greatly to Frank's disappointment, who was really longing for another glimpse of her lovely blue eyes and brown curls. Fishing seemed to have lost its charm, and his friend Sherwood rallied him unmercifully upon his sudden indifference to that fascinating sport.

Some time after their departure Minny wandered off by herself into the woods again, and although she resented most indignantly the theft committed the day before, and bestowed very injurious epithets upon the bold offender, I am afraid that in her heart she was secretly wishing that he would suddenly make his appearance before her, according to the programme of all well-conducted romances. But no, the gentleman was several miles away, and instead of his manly figure, appeared that of another gallant, who, unfortunately, was no favorite with the lady. With a beaming countenance, he seated himself beside her, and she was obliged to be polite for awhile, but soon rising from the ground, she walked towards the hotel, where, bowing adieu to her unwelcome companion, she sought the retirement of her own room.

That evening there was to be a dance, which her brother desired her very much to attend. "Say yes, Minny," he urged, "that's a good girl."

"If you will promise not to introduce that man to me."

"Why, I had no idea that you could be so resentful."

"Well, I shall remain in my room all the evening, if you will not give me the promise I desire."

So he finally submitted to her conditions and the capricious girl was an hour longer than usual preparing a very simple toilette. She was evidently intent upon victimizing somebody, although it could not have been Mr. Thornton. However, her praiseworthy endeavors to look charming were crowned with complete success, as, attired in spotless white, with a garland of green leaves upon her head, she entered the dancing-hall. Frank's dark eyes expressed his admiration very plainly, although he could not obtain one single glance from her. She passed him always with averted head, expressing as much quiet scorn as it was possible for such a dimpled, roguish face to express. Mr. Sherwood soon obtained an introduction to her, and after talking upon indifferent subjects, said: "My friend Thornton, Miss Stanley, is very anxious to make you an apology. He is very penitent, I assure you."

"Has he told everybody then about that shameful affair?" she exclaimed, her cheeks flushing scarlet.

"Oh no, he is too true a gentleman for that, notwithstanding his presumption sometimes."

"Presumption is a very mild term to use, Mr. Sherwood."

"But remember the provocation, Miss Stanley, although of course you could not realize that, as we gentleman did. May I not beg forgiveness for my friend?"

"I beg that you will say no more about it," she replied; so very coldly, that he thought it best to change the subject at once.

"A most inexorable little sprite," he said to Frank afterwards, "she would not hear a word. If you had only taken my advice, and waited awhile, you would stand a much better chance now."

"I wish something dreadful would happen that I might show my heroism in some way. Save her life for instance. If this hotel would only take fire, and afford me an opportunity to rescue her from the devouring flames. I have a great mind to set it on fire myself.

"Flirt with somebody else, Frank, that is the best way to bring those saucy girls round. I saw that pretty Miss Fields last evening, give you some very admiring looks."

"Pretty, Sherwood! Do you call her pretty?"

"Oh, of course she cannot compare with your blue-eyed fairy, but just take my advice now, and see if it doesn't work."

"But supposing Miss Fields should think me in earnest."

"Oh, she is accustomed to gentlemen's attentions, and it will only be necessary to take her out sailing once or twice. Little Miss Minny will condescend to notice you a little by that time, you see if she doesn't."

"Poor Mr. Thornton looked very sober last night, Minny," said Bell to her the next morning—"didn't you notice it?"

"Indeed, Bell, I took great pains to avoid him."

"What a very awkward person he is."

"Awkward! Why, I'm sure he has a fine figure."

"Oh, I thought you did not notice him," was the significant reply, and Minny with a very guilty face, turned away. To tell the truth, although apparently quite indifferent to the attractions of the gentleman in question, she had admired exceedingly his handsome face and manly bearing, and could have told, if necessary, the exact color of his hair and eyes, his height, and other peculiarities.

After this, the young lady and gentleman met quite frequently, but Frank now assumed an indifference equal to her own, and taking the advice of his friend, commenced paying attentions to Miss Fields, who received them very pleasantly.

"So Miss Minny," said her brother to her, "you have lost your admirer, through your excessive dignity, and Miss Fields with her black eyes has thrown you into the shade."

"I am sure he is welcome to her society, if he prefers it. I admire his taste, that is all I can say. An old coquette!" The young lady was just three years older than herself.

"Take care, dear, that sounds like pique." To which tantalizing speech she vouchsafed no reply, but looked away with a very suspicious trembling of the sweet lips.

Several days passed, and Frank continued his attentions to Miss Fields, they appearing to be remarkably good friends, but Minny always followed by a crowd of admirers, showed no symptoms of relenting, and no one suspected the tears she shed in private. For she was now quite as much in love as Frank himself, and if his natural boldness had not at this juncture entirely forsaken him, he would have found it out sooner. But when two persons are thinking so constantly of each other, an opportunity generall occurs for a mutual understanding, as happened in this case.

One day a large party was formed to visit one of the prettiest islands, and Minny had consented to go, little dreaming that her destiny would that day be decided. Her unfortunate admirer had annoyed her with his attentions the whole afternoon, and to be relieved from him, she wandered off alone to a pretty secluded spot, and was about to seat herself upon the soft grass, when she perceived that the place was already occupied by Mr. Thornton. She was drawing back, but rising from the ground with a stately bow, he said, "I will retire, Miss Stanley, as I know, of course that my society would be very distasteful to you."

"I do not wish to drive you away," was the confused reply.

"Will you let me stay, then?" he asked, his face fairly beaming with delighted surprise.

"I am sure you have just as much right to remain as I have," she replied, hardly daring to raise her eyes.

"Miss Stanley will you not let me tell you how much I regret my ungentlemanly conduct that day? But I am sure if you had been in my place, you would have done the same. Will you forgive me?"

"If you will promise not to do so again."

"Oh, I cannot promise that."

"What?" she cried, opening her great blue eyes at him, and making a movement to leave.

"Do not go without hearing me," he cried. "I love you, Minny, dearly, dearly, and you can take back what I stole the other day, if you would like to."

She put up her hand with a threatening gesture, but she was laughing softly, and Frank's boldness seemed to have returned as suddenly as it went away.

A RICH YOUNG MAN.

We call him "Bobolink, and "Pappoose," and "Old Blessed," and all sorts of names—you know how they do call babies. Your great six-year-old Harry would not think him much of a fellow—this small man of six months—but he thinks he is, and so does his mother, and his father, and all the family.

He considers himself quite rich, too, or, as grown-up people say, "well-off." He has such white, round little pegs fixed on to his hands for him to play with. He sticks them up and looks at them sideways, and edgeway, and everyway, and they never get lost like your playthings,—they are always on hand. They are so nice to eat, too. First one fist goes into his mouth, then the other, then both fists. The only trouble is he cannot swallow them, they are so big, or something. Too bad, isn't it? But he doesn't get discouraged. Why, it was only yesterday he was trying to swallow a large blanket shawl and all his petticoats; then he butted his head into a big feather pillow, and opened his mouth at that in a way that must have been alarming to the pillow.

Sometimes he gets hold of those little pink fellows down below. He thinks they are the cunningest. There is such a drove of them! He can't count them himself, but I believe there are as many as ten. One of them "goes to market," and one of them "stays at home;" and there is a little mite of a one that don't get any bread and butter. How he does squeal! Dear! dear! You would think this young man would cry to hear him; but he don't; the ripples of laughter come gurgling up his little fat throat, until, when at last the poor piggy gives his very hardest squeal, he almost explodes with glee. It's so pleasant to have jolly little fat piggies of one's own to play with! Ten live, pink piggies! Just think of it! But that is not all—oh, no! He owns a most lovely old piece of red flannel, which his grandma gave him, that is very valuable. It is such a pretty thing, and so bright! He turns it over, views it in every light, and tastes of it. If you should lay a ten-thousand dollar greenback down beside it, he would grasp in preference that gorgeous, magnificent rag. You couldn't buy that of him with ten or twenty thousand dollars.

Then he has a great many fine musical instruments that he plays on splendidly. Every newspaper he can get hold of he turns into a piano or an organ. He scratches his nails on them, and digs holes through them, and you ought to hear how beautifully they do rattle; but the brown paper that comes around the sugar is the best, that is so crackly and high-toned.—*Morning Star.*

BYRON'S FIRST LOVE.

Byron began to love Mary Chaworth when he was seventeen, and for twenty years the bright flame never died out. "Do you think I would ever marry that lame boy?" he himself overheard her say to her maid. But he went on loving her all the same, and more and more deeply, the further that space and time removed him from her. "I doubt sometimes," he writes, "whether, after all, a quiet and unagitated life would have suited me; yet I sometimes long for it. My earliest dreams, as most boys' are, were martial; but a little later they were all love and retirement, till the hopeless attachment to Mary Chaworth began and continued, though sedulously concealed, very early in my teens." The stanzas he wrote on leaving England for the first time, ending ever with the same refrain, "Because I cannot love but one," attest the thoroughness of the passion which had mastered him; and nothing is more certain than that he never loved again:

"To think of every early scene,
Of what we are, and what we've been,
Would whelm some softer hearts with woe,
But mine, alas! has stood the blow;
Yet still beats on as it begun,
And never truly loves but one!"

GROWING OLD.

How strangely our ideas of growing old change as we get on in life. To the girl in her teens the riper maiden of twenty-five seems quite passée. Twenty-two thinks thirty-five "an old thing." Thirty-five dreads forty, but congratulates herself that there may still remain some ground to be possessed in the fifteen years before the half century shall be attained. But fifty does not by any means give up the battle of life. It feels itself middle-aged and vigorous, and thinks old age a long way in the future. Sixty remembers those who have done great things at three-score; and one doubts if Parr, when he married the second time at one-hundred-and-twenty, had at all begun to feel himself an old man. Is it the principle of immortality in us which makes us feel young so long? We wear out our bodies as we do our garments; but by the time their fashion has grown quite obsolete will not the celestial robe which shall clothe our souls for the new life be ready?

☞ Barry Cornwall speaks of

"The day to-morrow of the mind,
That never comes."

HER ANSWER.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY MINNIE MAY.

Her picture lies on my table now,
And oh! it is wondrous fair—
I can see the light in the loving eyes,
And the tint of the gold-brown hair.
I can almost hear the merry laugh,
That parted the perfect lips,
And I seem to wait as the hand I sue,
For the touch of her finger tips.
The hand that she placed in mine one day
As she smiled through happy tears,
"I'll never say yes! For I'm sure," she said,
"You are older by twenty years."

But that was more than a year ago,
And she changed her mind, I wean,
For now, in my home, the livelong day,
Her smiling, fair face is seen.
I hear her step on the stairway now,
And I hear her voice in song;
Ah! she is happy, for at work or play
She is singing the live day long.
Ah, sweet, the love in my heart for you
Will never grow cold with years,
But I sure will smile at the naive reply
You gave me that day through tears.

FALSE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY MALCOLM ALSTYNE.

CHAPTER I.

Without, the wind swept with keen power up the long street, the passing pedestrian hurrying to escape its force; the snow lay white upon the earth, while from the gloomy sky it slowly drifted down; clouds of dull hue swept continually over the heavens. Within, the blaze glowed and crackled in the grate; luxury showed itself in the furnishing of the apartment; an air of cheerfulness in contrast to the wintry scene without, pervaded everything.

It was a day in January, and Maud Barclay was seated by the fire reading. She was alone. Maud was twenty, beautiful and accomplished; also the mistress of her uncle Thomas Barclay's fine residence. Her father and mother had both died when she was yet very young, and she had been left a special charge to her bachelor uncle. He was not very young when he had received Maud, a mere infant then, from her dying father's arms; now the frosts of sixty winters had silvered his locks. He was an old man, unmarried still, and Maud was the pet and idol of his life. He had been faithful to his charge, he had done everything in his power for her, and now from his large means she was furnished with everything that she desired. Maud's had been a happy life, its brightness only dimmed by the somewhat vague sorrow for the deathof her parents.

While Maud was reading a servant entered. "Well, Earnest, what is wanted?" Maud inquired.

"A woman at the door desires admittance," was the reply.

"Show her in, I will see her!"

In a short time a woman of apparently middle age was shown in.

"Miss Maud Barclay?" inquired the visitor, at once. Maud bowed.

"I answered at Mr. Thomas Barclay's office," said the woman, "an advertisement for a housekeeper in the daily paper." Maud noticed that the woman's voice was soft and musical. "Very well," she answered simply.

"He seemed pleased with me, and sent me here to you. I have forgotten, my name is Mrs. Rachel Deering."

"If you have satisfied my uncle, Mrs. Deering," Maud said, "you can consider yourself engaged."

So that matter was decided. When Mr. Barclay came home from business that evening he said—

"Maud, I sent you a woman that suited me for housekeeper; did she suit you?"

"Yes," replied Maud; "and she will commence her duties in the morning.

As time passed on Mrs. Rachel Deering showed herself well qualified to perform the duties of her position, and before the end of a fortnight she seemed entirely at home in the family. Maud rather liked her, yet at times she was filled with an inexplicable chilliness, and even dread in her presence. As for Mr. Barclay he saw that she performed her duties faithfully, and that was all he cared for.

Maud Barclay possessed many suitors. However, it was generally supposed that there were but two who had any chance of winning her hand. The two young men were named respectively, Gerald Browning and Harvey Owens. Gerald Browning was a bookkeeper for the firm of Barclay & Co. He was twenty-four. He possessed a countenance that indicated steadiness of purpose, and at the same time high moral principle. None could deny that he was a thorough gentleman, but he was poor. He had, besides, a widowed mother to support. However, his prospects were very fair, and by the aid of earnest labor, which all who understood him knew he would perform, he would in a few years, be on the high road to business success. He was highly popular with both employers and employees.

His rival, Harvey Owens, was unlike him in at least one thing: he was not a working man, never bothering his head about debits and credits or anything of the kind. He was the only son and heir of the formerly retired but now deceased banker, Thorp Owens, Esq. Of course there was no necessity for his entering into the petty details of business.

It is rather a hard task to successfully describe Harvey Owens. That he was a very handsome man is not to be denied. Not to describe his person is not to describe the man. His countenance at first glance seemed a frank enough one. Yet if it should be closely noticed for some time, there would be beheld an occasional expression that would not be liked. It would enter the mind of the observer that this man thwarted in his plans might be possibly a dangerous character. With this slight descriptions of him, and stating that he possessed the manners of a gentleman, we propose to pass on.

One evening Gerald Browning tested his fate. He told Maud Barclay that he loved her, and asked her to be his wife.

Maud loved him—you see we are quickly disposing of the chances of Harvey Owens, and told him so. He was made happy by the consciousness that she would be his wife. Shortly after this Harvey Owens offered himself, and was astonished at being refused. He was rejected kindly, but none the less firmly for that. The refusal was unexpected to him. He had been confident that when he should offer his handsome self, his personal influence together with that of the position in life he occupied, would render his chances of being accepted certain.

He left Maud Barclay with the darkest passions of his heart aroused. "I suppose she prefers that clerk, Gerald Browning, to myself," he muttered; "if she does, he will learn that to be my successful rival is a worse fate by far than to never have won her love. Who is he that he should be preferred to me, who could light my cigar with the value of all that he is worth, and never feel the loss? A strange taste, truly. Bah! it can't be that the reason of her rejecting me is because she loves him!"

And so his thoughts ran on till he reached his room, where he locked himself up alone. He threw himself down on a sofa, and his anger cooled to some extent. "I needn't be so despairing," he thought; "there is still hope for me; she didn't say that she loved any one. Even if she does, I will not give up thus, I will continue the battle to the last. I have been careless and over-confident, but I will work more carefully henceforth. What care I that she has rejected me once, so that I win her in the end. She *shall* be mine yet. I, Harvey Owens, who have never, thus crossed in my will, till now, *will* get possession of this proud beauty. I will exert every power of my mind; I will bring every means within my reach to bear upon her—and I *will* win. And if necessary, you, Gerald Browning, will be taught to beware of being in my way."

Gerald Browning soon told Mr. Barclay that he had been so fortunate as to win the love of his niece; and then he asked his consent to their union as soon as he, Gerald, should be in a position to marry.

"That will not be very long," he added; "my salary is now very fair, thanks to your kindness; and you know that—that—"

"I will finish your sentence," said Mr. Barclay, kindly. "I have promised you a partnership in our concern. Well, I have always entertained a high regard for you; and, as Maud loves you, I can only grant my consent. However, there need be no haste in this matter. I am scarcely ready to part with her yet."

He paused for a moment, and then continued:

"I want you to travel in the West for a few months, to settle up some business I have there. When you return we will settle this matter more definitely. For the present, you must be contented with Maud's love, and my approbation."

Gerald could do nothing but assent, and in a few days his arrangements were made for starting on his journey.

"Maud, dear Maud!" he said to her at almost the last moment previous to his departure, "your love for me must not grow cold while I am absent."

"You wrong me in saying that, Gerald," was the answer. "Do I seem like one who would love so lightly that separation would cool my love? I thought you knew me better than that."

"Pardon me," he said, quietly. "I spoke on the impulse of the moment. I have faith in your constancy. I should not have even expressed a doubt if I had considered. Your love is true."

CHAPTER II.

Three months passed by, and no events of special importance occurred to the characters of our story.

To Maud and Mr. Barclay, Mrs. Rachel Deering was the cause of some wonder. Each of them often thought that she seemed an unusual character for a housekeeper. Something like an atmosphere of mystery hung about her. There was a consciousness that they could not read her nor understand her.

She never referred to her past life, and moved about the house calmly and quietly, never neglecting a duty, causing everything to move with punctual exactness. She had the manners of a perfect lady, and her form was as graceful as that of Maud. On several occasions Mr. Barclay had approached her when her face was turned from him, and had called her Maud, only discovering his mistake when he could behold her face. This resemblance of figure did not seem especially strange to him, however; that two persons should have forms alike was nothing very uncommon. But then there was something else in which Maud and the housekeeper were alike—this was the tones of their voices. Mr. Barclay first noticed this when, one evening, he had heard some one giving orders to a servant. He thought it was Maud, surely, and wishing to speak to her, he proceeded towards the voice. He was much much astonished to find that it was Mrs. Deering who had been giving the orders. He said nothing at the time, but shortly afterwards spoke to Maud upon the subject.

"Have you noticed," he asked, "that there is not only a decided resemblance between your figure and Mrs. Deering's, but that your voices are alike?"

"I have noticed the resemblance in both cases," Maud answered.

"Singular, isn't it?"

"It is a little strange," Maud replied, "but still nothing to excite special astonishment."

With this the subject was dropped.

Almost four months had passed since Gerald's departure, when one evening Mr. Barclay came home, complaining that he was ill. He retired to rest, saying he would be better by morning. During the night—at what time, she did not know—Maud awoke with a cry. She was sitting bolt upright in her bed, while a strange feeling of horror possessed her. She was trembling like a leaf shaken by the wind. The strangeness of her sensations was inexplicable; she was wide awake in her own room, why should she be so terrified?

She composed herself, and tried to sleep. She did slumber again, finally, but she tossed about feverish and unrefreshed, visions of terror floating across her dreams. She arose just as the gray dawn of morning was penetrating her chamber, and going to her uncle's room, rapped lightly at the door, intending to inquire how he was.

There was no answer to her knock, so she repeated it, but louder than before. Still there was no answer, and so when she had rapped half a dozen times, she tried the door. It was unfastened. She walked in. Thomas Barclay was lying with the cover of his bed drawn up over his face.

"Uncle Thomas," said Maud, "are you asleep?"

He did not reply. Holding her light with one trembling hand, with the other she drew the covering from his face. A terrible realization became hers; for, with one glance at the deathly white face that met her gaze, she saw that the icy hand of the Great Destroyer had forced Thomas Barclay to bow to its power.

Maud wondered afterwards at the calmness with which she acted. She placed the lamp upon a stand, and taking hold of the bell-rope, rang a peal that brought Dick Spencer, the colored servant of her uncle, immediately.

"You here, Miss Maud?" he ejaculated. "What's the matter?"

Maud pointed to the still white face of her uncle. "He is dead," she uttered quietly.

A moment later her calmness gave way. A dull apathetic pain had thus far possessed her. But those words of her own touched the keen point to her anguish. With wild sobs she bent over her uncle.

It is not necessary to dwell on the scene of wild confusion and terror that ensued in the Barclay mansion, when it was known by the household that its master was dead, so we pass over it without any special details.

There being no suspicions of foul play, the very common verdict, "died of heart disease," was returned of Thomas Barclay.

Why should there be any suspicions that a crime had been committed? The dead man had no enemies. There was not a single sign of violence about his person. He had not been murdered for the sake of gain, for not even his watch was taken from his pocket. The third day after his death the mortal part of Thomas Barclay was laid in the tomb.

Maud's grief shall be passed over briefly. It was deep and heartfelt. It was in reality the first great sorrow of her life. Thomas Barclay had been more than a parent to her, had supplied the place of both father and mother.

Gerald Browning had been telegraphed for immediately. But Mr. Barclay had been buried for a couple of days when he came. He was a great distance away, and the telegram had been delayed in reaching him.

His intended bride met him joyfully. She needed sympathy, and he, Gerald, could sympathize with her.

"Dear Maud," he said as he kissed her pale, sweet face, "let me be your comforter."

"You shall, Gerald, you shall," she answered.

Although each would probably have desired an early wedding, it was decided that from respect to Mr. Barclay's memory the marriage should not take place until the ensuing fall.

Mr. Barclay's will was as every one expected. His entire property was left to Maud. It was an old will dated years previously.

The interconrse of the lovers now became very intimate. The course of love seemed to be running smoothly. Maud's grief began to soften. The poignancy of sorrow must wear away with time. Maud's spirits began to return; something of the vivacity of old was hers; her cheeks, which had been so pale with grief, recovered their usual bloom.

* * * * * *

One evening in June Gerald called on Maud. He was ushered into the parlor to wait for her. He was sitting buried in thought, when her dress rustled close by him; she had entered unheard. But was it Maud who stood by him? "No," "yes," he thought to himself in the next breath. Of course it was Maud, yet for some reason or other she had seemed unlike herself at first.

He saluted her affectionately, but it appeared to him that for the first time since their betrothal there was coldness in her manner toward himself. He commenced a conversation, but it dragged in an embarrassing manner. What was the matter? There was something in Maud's actions this evening that he could not understand.

"Maud," he said finally in a light manner, "what makes you so cold toward me?"

"Am I?" she said; "I was not aware of it."

Whether it was by an effort or naturally the spell of the girl's coldness was broken. She became even unusually gay and lively.

There was no break in the conversation after that.

"By-the-way," the girl said during the evening, "Mrs. Deering, our housekeeper, left last night abruptly, unaccountably and somewhat mysteriously."

"Did she leave no clue behind her?" Gerald inquired.

"She left a letter. I am at a loss, however, to understand why she should depart at the dead hour of night. I would have objected to her leaving, for she seemed to be a steady, decorous person, but still I could have thrown no bar in the way of her doing so."

"It is unaccountable," Gerald observed; "I suppose she didn't—didn't—"

"She took nothing at all but what belonged to her."

"Did she make any explanation in her letter?"

"She did not. I have it in my room, and you may read it. I will get it myself."

She left the apartment, but soon returned, bringing the missive. She handed it to Gerald, and he read the following words:

"Miss Maud Barclay—I am compelled to leave the place in which nothing but kindness has been shown me, without being able to explain why I do so. That my reasons for doing this are sufficient I ask you to believe, but at the same time I cannot give them. Do not think harshly of me for taking this step; if you knew my reasons you could not. I thank you that you have rendered my stay with you so pleasant.

"Mrs. Rachel Deering."

CHAPTER III.

It is not to be supposed that during all this time Harvey Owens was not trying to make any advances from the position that he occupied in the heart of Maud.

With the intention defined to himself that he would use any plans whatever, evil ones if necessary, to win Maud, he commenced with the very gentlest ones. He was soon confirmed in his suppositions that Maud loved Gerald, and though rage and jealousy possessed him, his passion did not abate. Knowing that he was not loved seemed to increase it, instead of destroying it. To give up the girl easily was not what he designed doing. But he rather determined that he would go to the work of making her his coolly and cunningly. And he did do so too. It seemed that no man could take a rejection more meekly than he was taking it. When he met Maud it was with as much deference and politeness as could possibly be used.

He had still been coming to the Barclay mansion occasionally, meeting Maud with an apparently quiet resignation to his fate. Of course Maud treated him kindly and courteously.

But from about the time of Gerald Browning's return, or more particularly from the time of Mrs. Deering's disappearance, his visits began to be almost as frequent as they had been before he had declared himself. As to whether he received any encouragement will soon be seen.

Could it be possible that the woman who has been pictured as pure and honorable could prove false for the sake of such a man as Harvey Owens?

It seemed so. Alas, alas! poor Gerald! There sprung up between him and the girl a coldness that dated from the period marked above, that of the disappearance of Mrs. Deering.

Gerald had thought that he read and understood the woman whom he had asked to be his wife; but he now saw in the mistress of the Barclay mansion traits that he had never before beheld. More, she seemed changed to an entirely different woman, one incomprehensible and mysterious. Her manner towards himself became imperious and tyrannical. She would see him or not see him as suited her pleasure. He was forced to obey every whim and caprice of her will.

One evening he told her that she did not seem to him like the Maud of old.

A baleful light flashed into the girl's eyes, an expression such as Gerald had never dreamed could come there.

"Indeed!" she said; "perhaps I do not suit you now: if that is the case, you know your remedy."

For a moment an angry reply trembled on Gerald's lips, but he crushed it back, and said no more upon the subject. Henceforth a keen mental agony was his; he realized that he had made a great mistake; the girl at whose feet he had laid his heart, he now saw was a being opposite to what he had supposed her to be.

"How could I have been so mistaken?" he asked himself many times; "how so blind?"

"She has changed," he would return in answer to himself, "yet this is impossible—a human being's whole nature does not change so quickly."

As to whether his love for her would continue or not was hard to tell. He felt that he still deeply loved, but it appeared to him that it was a being of the past, a shadowy one, as it were, who had been his idol, that still held his love.

In the presence of the mistress of Barclay mansion he was now unhappy. An influence that he could not explain chilled him. Something that he could not comprehend made his soul shudder. But he was made aware of the fact, soon, that there was a probability that not as much of her society would be his as had been anticipated.

"Browning," said a friend of his, confidentially, one day, "do you know that it is reported that Harvey Owens is gaining ground on you lately with regard to Miss Barclay?"

"I know nothing about it," replied Gerald.

"Look to the matter then. You know he was formerly your most prominent rival."

Gerald thought that, under the circumstances, it was but just that he should inquire into the matter fully. He quietly did so, and discovered that of which he had before been totally ignorant. Mr. Owens was on a much more intimate footing at the Barclay mansion than he had any right to be.

The next time he called upon Miss Barclay he remonstrated gently with her upon the subject. The dangerous gleam came into her eyes again.

"I am not your slave yet, to be governed by your whims," she said angrily.

"But, Maud," he remonstrated, "this is important. Think—"

"Cease!" she interrupted. "I wish to hear no more upon the subject. I will do as I please in the matter."

"But you must remember that you are to be my wife."

"Am I?" she said, with a sneer.

Her manner stung him more than her words.

"Not unless you wish to," he said coldly.

Then her anger flared out.

"So you are not particular," she cried. "Then let this farce end!"

Gerald became entirely calm; nothing should be done rashly on his part.

"Maud, consider well what you are saying," he replied; "let us not rashly break our engagement."

"It shall end now," was her answer. "I have no intention of marrying you. I would just as well tell you now as ever, that I wish the engagement broken. I do not love you."

"You loved me once," Gerald said softly.

"I never did, I never did. It was a mistake. I repeat, let this farce end; I am tired of it, tired of dissembling; tired of masking my sentiments. Are you agreed that it shall end? I tell you that it is my most ardent desire."

Gerald had grown very pale.

"I am sure," he said, haughtily, "that I have no desire to marry a woman who does not love me. I cannot do otherwise than grant you that this farce, as you call it, shall end. I bow to your desire, and shall trouble you no more. You are free to do as you wish. Farewell!"

A month later it was told in the town that Harvey Owens was to be the husband of the beautiful Maud Barclay, and not Gerald Browning.

"I wonder how it came about that Owens got ahead of Browning," said one gentleman on the street to another about this time. "A short time ago the latter occupied the footing of an accepted lover with Miss Barclay."

"I'm sure I can't tell," was the reply. "However, Browning was a great favorite with the old gentleman, but when his influence was removed the lady probably discovered that she preferred the other."

"I suppose you speak the truth. Yet Miss Barclay always appeared to me to be a person of more strength of mind than to engage herself to a man simply because it was her uncle's whim."

"Well, well, woman's a variable creature anyhow. You needn't agree with me unless you want to; but it's true, I do aver."

"How does Browning bear it?"

"Oh, he is rather wo-begone; but still, I suppose, not entirely heart-broken."

When the absolute falseness of this girl was proved to Gerald in the fact that she would soon become the wife of another, his suffering was increased by no additional pang. In truth it is doubtful whether the breaking of the engagement between them had added anything to his sorrow; he had found the depths of anguish when the knowledge had dawned upon his unwilling mind of what a great mistake he had made in his judgment of her. It is even probable that when he had considered the matter fully, that he discovered it a relief to be released from her.

After that, what mattered it to him whether she never married, or whether she gave herself immediately to another!

CHAPTER IV.

The mistress of the Barclay mansion and Mr. Harvey Owens were to be married in December.

He was exultant, was Harvey Owens. He had outgeneraled Gerald Browning. He had won the woman he wanted, and he rejoiced over it.

The first advance that he had made towards renewing his suit was some time after the death of Mr. Barclay. He had received more encouragement than he expected. He persisted, and the result is known.

His love now rose to full tide. That such natures as his can love with a strong, fiery love is not to be doubted. He said to himself, "I love her with a love a thousand times stronger than it was before. She suits me better now than she ever did."

That last sentence was doubtless the truest of all that he said. The gay, dazzling, fascinating woman of the present, apparently so totally different from the sweet, gentle, lovable Maud of the olden time, would certainly suit him better.

He had expressed a desire for an early wedding, and she had assented willingly enough. When the day was set, he grew impatient for its approach.

"I wish that you were mine now," he said to her one day not very long before the wedding.

"Am I not?" she returned.

"Yes, I suppose, but still—"

"Stop. I know what you would say," she interrupted. "You must not allow me to imply from your language that you doubt me."

"I do not," he answered. "I do not doubt you."

"I presume—" she commenced, and then stopped.

"You presume what?" he asked.

"I will speak plainly," she said. "It appears to me very natural that the fear might come to you sometimes of the possibility of my still loving Mr. Gerald Browning."

"Well?"

"Let me tell you that I never loved him. I am as sure of it as I am of my existence."

"You satisfy me," he returned. "If such a fear as you have spoken of has been mine, I will banish it forever."

But some attention must now be devoted to another character of this story. On the day before the wedding, which was to come off in the Barclay mansion, Gerald Browning was hurrying along the street to his place of business, when upon suddenly turning a corner he ran against an old man coming from the opposite direction. This old man seemed to be a toy peddler, for he had a glass case full of toys. Although old, he stood his ground very well.

"I am sorry I ran against you," said Gerald.

"No harm done," returned the old man. Then he added: "I believe I know you; you are Mr. Gerald Browning."

"I am," was the answer.

"Here is a note for you."

When he reached the store of his employer, Gerald opened the note and read it. Its contents were as follows:—

"Gerald—Meet me at the corner of Locust and Vine streets, this evening at nine o'clock, and I will communicate to you something of the greatest importance. As you value your happiness, be sure to be on hand, for I am engaged in an affair in which you are most deeply interested. Would come to see you, but haven't time.

"Alfred Bonar."

The writing and name were both very familiar. They were those of a friend with whom he was on very intimate terms, a clever detective, who had worked up some very complicated cases.

But what could he mean by requesting a meeting in so mysterious a manner? Especially why had he sent the letter to him by the old peddler?

A light entered his brain in response to this last query.

"Cleverly disguised," he said to himself; "upon my word, cleverly disguised."

"Well," he continued, "there is something of importance to be developed—and I will most assuredly be on hand to assist my friend, if that is what he wants."

Punctually at the appointed hour that evening, Gerald was at the place designated.

He had waited but a few moments when a carriage drove up rapidly. It stopped.

"Browning," said a low voice.

"I am here," Gerald answered.

"Come; get in, and as we go I will explain to you."

Gerald obeyed. As they drove off, he said—

"How far are we to travel? You see I commence in an indirect way to find out what you want with me. Is this a ride for pleasure? Why this mystery?"

"We have a dozen miles to go," Mr. Bonar answered. "And seriously, this mystery means a great deal."

"I suppose," Gerald said, "that you will explain immediately, and thus relieve my anxiety."

"Yes."

Then, in a low tone, Mr. Bonar began to make a strange revelation. It was indeed a marvellous story that he told. Its effect upon Gerald Browning was very great, and when it was ended, he was thrilled with wild excitement.

CHAPTER V.

The Barclay mansion was ablaze with light, and its parlors echoed with the hum and laughter of merry voices. The night had come for the wedding. The assemblage fluttered, and gossipped, and enjoyed itself.

But it stilled to perfect silence when the minister commenced the ceremony that should make the two standing before him, one.

She who was to be the bride, was somewhat pale but composed.

The minister had not yet uttered a word when there was a rush of feet along the hall. What could so many persons mean by entering so unceremoniously.

All seemed to pause outside the parlor doors, but one. He entered. It was Mr. Alfred Bonar.

He stopped for a moment at the door; then drawing himself up to his full six feet, walked to the side of the bride elect.

"I presume I shall have to interrupt this ceremony," he said, as coolly as if it was his habit to interrupt marriage ceremonies.

Then he turned to the woman who had her hand on Harvey Owens' arm, and said, in the same calm, ringing tone, as he placed his hand upon her shoulder:

"*I arrest you for the murder of Thomas Barclay.*"

All of the assemblage were standing in silent astonishment. Before even the astonished bridegroom could raise his voice in remonstrance, the detective snapped a pair of hand-cuffs over the delicate wrists of the woman

"This is hard," said Mr. Bonar, a gleam coming into his cool, gray eyes, "but she is dangerous. If she should happen to have a dagger about her person, she might use it with terrible effect unless thus prevented."

Harvey Owens recovered his voice.

"Scoundrel, what do you mean by this outrage," he cried, springing forward to strike the detective.

But his hands were caught in a grasp as strong as bands of steel.

"Keep cool," said Alf Bonar, "keep cool, young man, and I will explain."

"It means," he said, releasing his hold, and pushing Harvy Owens away from him, "that this little play, this farce, tragedy, or whatever you please, that this woman has been acting, is ended."

"You shall pay dearly for this insult to Miss Barclay," said Harvey, hoarsely.

"Miss Barclay, indeed!" said the detective, scornfully; "that's your cry is it. Perhaps there are some who will object to a murderess and an impostor's being called Miss Barclay! Gerald, enter!"

Gerald Browning entered in response to this summons. But he was not alone. A lady, closely veiled, was hanging on his arm. Behind him were half a dozen officers, with two men handcuffed, whom they forced along. These two looked as if they might be father and son.

"If this woman's name, who is standing here in bridal robes," uttered Mr. Alf Bonar, "if *her* name is Maud Barclay, then there are two Maud Barclays—for the one upon the arm of Gerald Browning, is she whom we knew of old as the fair niece of the murdered man, Thomas Barclay."

Maud had quietly removed her veil, and now stood revealed to the astonished auditors of this strange scene. Maud Barclay, in very truth, pale and thin, but sweetly beautiful, it was!

The pretender had thus far borne it all with a strange calmness. But now she became greatly agitated, and drawing close to Harvey Owens, she shivered like one in an ague fit.

"It is Maud Barclay," she muttered, "and I am lost!"

"Possessing the key to this mystery," continued Mr. Bonar, "it is easily solved. I can soon tell the story. This woman having accidentally met Miss Barclay, and discovering that there was a strange resemblance in features, person, and voice, conceived a plot worthy of an Archimago. She came to this home disguised completely, and, calling herself Mrs. Rachel Deering, became housekeeper here. To further her designs she destroyed Mr. Barclay with a subtle poison. She held his life so lightly that she killed him rather than have his eyes upon her, when she should attempt to carry out her foul plot. The rest was easily enough accomplished. Maud was abducted by the assistance of this woman's father and brother, whom we have here handcuffed. Then Mrs. Rachel Deering, *alias* Margaret Ruffner, assumed her disguise and took her full part. How well she has succeeded in playing it, thanks to that strange resemblance of person, and to the fact of her possessing the manners and education of a lady, you all understand.

"There are no thanks due to this creature, this terrible woman, that Maud Barclay is not dead, for she intended her destruction. But this younger villain that you see here took a fancy to Miss Barclay, and began to counterplot. Margaret Ruffner has supposed all along that her victim was dead, that her destruction had been fully carried out. Instead, she has been confined in a stone house a dozen miles out from the city. This young scamp expected to force her into a marriage with him, so he deceived Margaret Ruffner, and succeeded in persuading his father to assist him in that deception. Enough of this. Maud Barclay, thanks to it all, is here alive and unharmed.

"*I* checkmated them. I stumbled on this case by accident, however. I was searching out another piece of villainy perpetrated by these two worthies, when I made discoveries that startled me. I do not propose to dwell on how I have unravelled this mystery. Suffice it to say, that I have obtained all the facts in the affair, partly by my own labors, and partly as the consequence of those labors, from the confessions of these prisoners."

* * * * *

There is only a little more to tell. Gerald had found that *his* Maud was not false, but forever true to him. It was only that one, utterly false, had stood in her place. He wondered that the eyes of his love had not been keener. Yet it was enough to deceive the senses of any one. His soul had understood the difference in the hearts of the two, but until light had been given him he had been unable to comprehend it. All the trouble and doubt were now cleared away. It was not long till there *was* a wedding in the Barclay mansion. Maud and Gerald were married.

The two Ruffners, father and son, were convicted of crimes that hanged them.

And Margaret Ruffner and Harvey Owens? She escaped from prison, and he mysteriously disappeared at the same time. The woman had entirely fascinated him. He had transferred his love from the true to the false. His money was probably the golden key that unlocked her prison doors. Converting all his property into ready money he fled with her. They were never traced.

As for happiness they could never find it. Her hand was dyed in blood, and he was an unprincipled man. On them heaven could never smile. Retribution would come some time.

THE SWAMP OUTLAWS;

OR,

A SECRET OF TWENTY YEARS.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY CHARLES MORRIS.

CHAPTER XXI.

A BID FOR SILENCE.

Miss Wilton flew to her room with all the fervor of impatience. Half in hope, half in dread, her eager eyes searched the table for the missing documents. In vain; they were not there. She extended her quest throughout the room, peered in every possible and impossible place, but without finding a trace of the objects of her search.

She was not only disappointed, she was terrified, so vitally important to her were these stolen papers. It had looked so probable that the robbers would not open the casket, that she naturally felt assured that she must have left out the papers. Her failure to find them proved, therefore, a terrible shock.

Clinging to the last hope, she conceived that the burglars might have dropped them on their path. She acted instantly upon this thought, and leaving the house, went through the garden and entered the glen by the route they had been seen to take. Eagerly her eyes read the ground as she advanced, but in vain.

As she stopped, half-despairing, debating with herself whether to continue the search, she saw Du Bar advancing towards her, following her from the house. He had either seen and pursued her, or else was actuated by the same motive that impelled her.

She maintained a severe silence till he drew near and accosted her.

"Why, my dear Miss Wilton," he said, "what brings you here at this time in the evening? Such a home-body as you."

"It is simply that I failed to find my papers at home; and I have also failed to find them here. They are still in the hands of your ruffians."

"My ruffians! You do not expect me to understand such language as that?"

"Yes, sir, your ruffians. Engaged by you to commit robbery, and probably directed not to stop short at murder, if they judged it necessary."

"So then I am at the bottom of all the thievery that takes place in the county! If a hen roost is robbed next, you will be imputing it to some scheme of mine."

"I certainly do impute this scheme to you. In all the house there was not a thing stolen except my casket, and this could be of value to no one but you, besides myself."

"Perhaps they mistook it for a jewel box."

"There is sufficient of this, sir. I know you thoroughly. But you do not seem to know me. Did you suppose that I would quietly submit to such a robbery? If so you are destined to be disappointed. They are in the hands of your agents; of that there is no doubt. Unless they are in mine by this time to-morrow I shall no longer feel bound to preserve your secret. In fact I will make a full exposure of all this mystery to the world, and we shall then see who has the best of the game."

"You will not have, that is certain. That would be a good way to put the whole game into the hands of Howard and Miss Brown, and take it out of ours. You will not do anything quite so absurd."

"Will I not? If you imagine so you are destined to be sadly mistaken."

"You will not; for the simple reason that you would gain nothing and lose all by such a movement. You now stand in the position of a respectable woman. How will you stand then?"

"That does not deter me. The country is wide enough to afford me a home where I would not be known."

"Yes, you would probably find a home in a prison. Don't fancy that the law will overlook your offence."

"I don't fear it. I have done nothing that renders me legally responsible. It is you and your worthy father that need to fear, I am but a blind tool in your hands."

"Blind? Well, you are cool, certainly. You, the chief deviser of the enterprize. But understand me, Miss Wilton, you may make an exposure as fast as you wish. I do not fear it. What proof have you that this girl is anything but Nellie Brown? The papers you depended on for proof are gone. You have nothing besides but your bare word. That will hardly be enough to settle so important a question."

"Unless those papers are brought back you will find what I can do. Here are you masquerading as Simon Du Bar, consorting with outlaws, striving to kill Robert Howard; are not all these points of importance?"

"Not a jot, for you cannot prove a point of them all. There is no evidence on the two latter points, and as for my name that is my whim."

"My dear nephew Simon, or which other of your multitudinous names shall I use? Do you really think that you can escape me so easily, or that I am weak enough to accept your estimate of my power? I still possess letters of importance as you will find them."

"Yes, letters from John to Susan, highly important no doubt."

"I know where to lay my hands on proof as good as this which you have stolen. And I am inclined, also, to the opinion that you would find my knowledge of your complicity in these attacks upon Robert Howard rather awkward circumstances. Were I heard upon this question in a court of justice, I might have to tell more then would be good for you."

"And bring yourself in as an accessory after the act. Do you suppose you would escape scot free after such evidence? It would not hurt me a particle, as it is all conjecture on your part. It might hurt you, as you have hushed up what you consider my criminality. Come, come, you must take new ground."

"I have taken my ground, and am not to be driven from it. Unless those papers are in my hands by this time to-morrow, I will lay my statement of the whole business in the hands of justice. And what is more, I will take care to secure myself from the

murderous efforts of your worthy companions."

"You will do nothing of the kind. I will acknowledge that I believe with you, that the papers are where I can get them, and you cannot. I have the game in my own hands, and intend to keep it so, in spite of all your threats. Your foolish effort to black-mail me, induced me to show you that I was not to be so easily trapped, that you might know, in the future, who you are dealing with. I made a proposal of marriage to your ward, to-day. If she had accepted, I would have married her and defied your proofs. She declined, and, in consequence, I took another path out of the difficulty. You may go on now, and prove what you can. I care not a jot for your proofs. If you had kept within the bounds of reason, and not attempted to force me into your measures, I might have given you five thousand. Not for your papers, but simply that you have done your duty, so far, faithfully."

His resolute manner convinced her that he really cared nothing for her threats. The powerful proofs that had given her assurance shrivelled and disappeard in the fire of his scorn. She attempted to answer him, to keep up still her show of determination, but failed in the effort—and after a few struggling sentences, which simply served to show that she was defeated and unnerved by the struggle, she turned away from her tormentor, and buried her face in her hands, a low moan of distress showing the utter yielding of her powers of resistance.

"There, there, my dear cousin, don't try on the pathetic. I am quite satisfied with your acknowledgement of what you were foolish to deny, that I am right and you wrong. Now that you are duly sorry for your bad behavior, I will tell you what I have been thinking of. As I said before, you have been faithful, and I think faithfulness deserves a reward. It is my intention to make you a present of the sum mentioned, five thousand dollars, as I think you have deserved it. But not upon compulsion, Cousin Wilton. You do wrong to try force with me; petition were much better."

She flung off with indignation the hand he had laid on hers, and turned on him eyes that burned with anger.

"You are angry—but I vow I can't see why. I think that I have offered you a very liberal gift. If you only consent to act sensibly, I may yet give you that amount which you so weakly sought to force from me. There is no telling what the future may bring forth, if you only continue to behave properly."

"I didn't wish to force you, John. You have not treated me fairly. You know you haven't. I did not ask of you anything unreasonable; and now you want to make a show of generosity by offering me, as a gift, less than I claimed as a right. It is not fair either, to reflect on me because I am not so strong of will as yourself."

"That is not the question. Do you accept my gift, or not? If the offer is once withdrawn, it will not be made again."

"Yes, yes!" she cried, hastily. Then turned from him and ran towards the house, as if afraid that her indignation might force her to refuse his offer if she stayed longer.

"The she wolf!" he muttered, looking after her. "It is well I have drawn her teeth, for she was in a dangerous mood. Fool, with all her wisdom, I have bought her off for a quarter of what she claimed, and what she would have forced from me had she persisted. Well, there is some virtue in keeping a stiff upper lip. Either she or I had to give way, for I would not have dared to permit her threatened exposure. Luckily the woman proved, as usual, the weaker vessel. It is not so much the money as the precedent that I care for. Had she gained the victory in this battle, I should have been her slave forever after. She is not aware of her power, which is equivalent to not having any!"

Smiling, with a great sense of relief, as these thoughts passed through his mind, he walked away, leaving the scene solitary as before.

It did not long remain so. Two new actors speedily appeared upon the stage so lately vacated. These were Mr. Howard and Pete.

"Well, my boy," said Mr. Howard, halting, and turning so as to face his ebon follower, "are we far enough away now for this momentous secret of yours to be disclosed? Or are you afraid the winds will take it, and whisper it into forbidden ears?"

Pete, with the instinct of the scout stirring in his young blood, ran hastily up and down the glen, peering into every crevice, and behind every tree, as if in search of a concealed enemy. Satisfied that the coast was clear, he returned to where Mr. Howard had seated himself on the buttressed root of an oak, watching his movements with a smile of amusement.

"Well, Pete? Not a mouse stirring, eh? Out with it now, my lad. Unfold your budget and let us see its contents."

"I didn't brung you here not for nothin'," said Pete, deprecatingly. "You told me I could yearn somethin' more ef I done keep me eyes open."

"Exactly. Have you spent what I gave you, and want to borrow more?"

"Not much," he answered, indignantly; "but I aint bin come here for dat, nohow. Didn't you jest tell me to keep me eyes and ears bofe open?"

"I have an indistinct recollection of something of the sort."

"I's kept dem open, an me mouf shet. Dey can't fool Pete, nohow."

"And what have you in your hand?"

"See here, Mars Howard, I tink I's cotched him dis time."

Pete held out his hands exultingly, clutching some papers, blank, so far as visible.

Howard had been till now cool and listless, as if imagining that the boy's secret could be of no great importance. At sight of this last movement, a sudden flush of excitement came into his face.

"What have you got there?" he cried. "Where did you get those papers? Are they those which Miss Wilton has lost?"

"Jest dem. You's hit it, fust guess," said Pete, with a grin, handing Mr. Howard the papers.

He hastily opened them, and read their contents with a visible excitement that rapidly grew beyond all decorous limits. He leaped to his feet, and fairly danced with joy, grasping Pete by the shoulders and flinging him round as if he had been a top.

"You're a jewel boy! a black diamond of the first water! I don't care where you got these things, so long as I have them. Ha, my friend Simon, I have you now; all the honors in my hand already, and here is the odd trick. Pete I'll make you rich for this. Here's ten dollars to begin with, as earnest of what I will do for you. Why, boy, there is a fortune hanging on these documents. Yes, and a little bit of revenge, or retribution, if that is a better word. Keep quiet, on your life, till this time to-morrow. After that you can say what you please. How did you get the papers?"

Pete, who had been dancing with equal glee, and much more irrepressible muscles, forced his limbs into momentary repose to answer.

"I wos climbin' 'long de side ob de house, an' seed Missi Wilton a readin' dem, an' a puttin' dem in de box. Den when de Budds bin come an ax for her, I jest got in, to look at de box. Somehow I got de papers in my han', when I heerd dem comin' up stairs, an' I knowed in a minit' what day was arter. So I went out de winder quicker'n I got in, dat's sure. When I come to feel in me pockets, dere was de letters. I done gone stole 'em meself, an' didn't know it."

"There is one thing sure, they don't belong to either of the parties, the one who had them, nor the one who wanted them. As it is my object to put them into the hands in which they rightfully belong, I can see no harm in my retaining them for the present. I will not be long in letting the interested parties know I have them, and in giving them an opportunity to claim them, if they think theirs is the best right. I'll not forget you, Pete, my prince of black scouts."

They, too, then departed, leaving the glen to night and solitude

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PLOT RIPENS.

The next day dawned bright and auspicious. The clear blue skies only prognosticated fair weather on earth's face and in men's hearts. Howard walked under the morning sun much, cogitating. Evidently, the peaceful influence of the pleasant morning failed to reach his brain. Matters of stormy import were at work there.

Du Bar joined him, his face all sunshine, whatever may have been in his heart.

"Well, Howard, my boy," he said, "why so sober when the sun is doing its prettiest to waken you to a sense of the fact that it is a divine morning? Come put on your hat, and join me in a walk. I hate to play the mouse in fair weather. The fields and woods for me, and let bookworms and rats keep house."

"I am not in the mood for walking," said Howard; adding to himself, "nor would I dare walk far with you in the present posture of affairs."

"Why, what is up? You are generally ready enough."

"It is that with me the season of play has passed; that of business, commenced. The condition of affairs in this district has gone quite beyond endurance. There have been no less than three attempts upon my life. One on that of Miss Brown. My messenger is stopped on the highway and robbed. And now we have burglary in open day. What outrage will not be attempted next?"

"It is a bad state of affairs, that is sure."

"It's an infernal murderous business," cried Bradley, the innkeeper, who was standing near. "The whole county ought to rise and root out the devils till they hadn't a tail left to wag. I'm in it, hand and glove, for one."

"You may have a chance. I have heard this morning from the Sheriff of the county. He agrees that some movement must be made, and is doing his best to organize one. He wishes me to take the matter in hand at Burton and the surrounding country, and feel the public pulse."

"I'm afraid you'll find it beating slow," said Du Bar.

"Perhaps so. I have called a preliminary meeting for this evening, of just a few parties, to talk over the matter. I would like you to be present, Du Bar."

"I am not aware just now that I have any objections. Where is it to be?"

"Why I spoke of it last night, in Miss Brown's presence, and she insists on my using her parlor for the purpose. You know what she is when a whim gets into her head. There was nothing for me but to submit."

"That will do as well as any place. I apprehend nothing but talk, and that will not frighten the ladies. I have heard so many empty threats of action, that I begin to doubt the courage of the good people here."

"Likely enough it may be found oozing out at their fingers' ends when the time for action arrives, but they certainly will not be cheated of the inestimable privilege of fighting their battles at tongue's point, if not at sword's point."

"Well, if you are not for walking, I am. So, here's for the woods, and the sunshine, and a good shot, if there's any to be had."

Howard looked after him with a grim smile.

"If you but knew my object in asking your presence to-night! I will spring a mine on you that will seriously damage your assurance. The fellow is certainly a dangerous foe. Few could wear so fair a face on so foul a brain. But, serpent as you are, I will draw your fangs."

But cutting short Howard's reflections, and the slow progress of the day, we must transport ourselves to the evening. The principal parties present at the meeting called by Howard were Squire Judson, Doctor Hamilton, and Solomon Muddle. Du Bar was present, as he had promised. There were two or three others of the villagers, among them the constable, who had made himself so active in the first pursuit of the outlaws.

Howard desired the presence of Miss Nellie and Miss Wilton, somewhat to the disapprobation of several of the men. But he insisted that they were specially interested parties, and cut short the argument by going after them and inviting them to join the meeting.

"Do not think it strange," he said, "that I desire the presence of ladies in business that seems fitted only for men. I have a special reason for it, which will unfold itself as I proceed. This meeting was called ostensibly for the purpose of considering how best to destroy this nest of murderous outlaws. I have, however, another object, equally important, in view, and to this the presence of the ladies is desirable."

"That is quite another thing," said the Squire. "I simply thought that our talk would prove too tame for their liking. But so long as you have something more interesting to present, I am glad to have their presence."

"Thank you," replied Nellie. "Yet I think you might have credited us with some interest even with the ostensible subject."

"Matters of theft and bloodshed are not generally pleasant to female ears."

"Much you know about the ladies, Squire. In our case particularly, where my aunt has been robbed, and I half drowned, by these same interesting Budds of promise, we are not likely to object to such measures as you are likely to devise."

"Say no more, Squire. You are floored," said Solomon.

"I yield myself, rescue or no rescue," replied the Squire.

"I thank you, no," cried Nellie. "If I had a prisoner of your weight on my conscience, I fear I should not sleep soundly. You are free, on parole of honor, always to say what you think, even if I have to suffer for it."

"Thanks for the privilege. I will be frank enough. That you may depend upon."

"But are we not already suffering from the presence of a lady at our meeting?" said Du Bar. "This is not the business we are here for."

"Right," replied Howard. "We will stop sparring, and come to direct blows."

"And first oblige us by detailing the mysterious matter which you just declared to be your main object in convening this meeting," said the doctor.

"Precisely what I wish to do," replied Howard. "And I must ask your pardon for giving considerable preliminary detail before reaching the pith of the subject."

A general stir marked the curiosity with which those present awaited his promised interesting business. They settled themselves in attitudes of attention, as if convinced that here was to be something worth listening to. Du Bar rose and walked over to the mantel, where he stood a moment seemingly examining a porcelain vase. He then turned and seated himself in a chair that stood beside an open window, looking out upon the garden. Leaning his elbow on the sill he turned towards Howard, as if awaiting the promised mystery.

His movements had been closely watched by Howard; who fancied that he saw signs of nervousness in this apparently careless movement of his foe. A slight smile marked his lip as he proceeded.

"The matter to which I desire to call your attention begins more than twenty years back, and concerns people and places all of which are unknown to you. But before I finish I hope to introduce matters in which you all have a vital interest, and therefore request that you will attend to my preliminary details. In the city of Richmond resided, more than twenty years ago, a widow lady named Ellen Wilson. Her husband had been dead for a number of years, and she had but a single child, a daughter, named Amelia. Mrs. Wilson was of a stern, cold temperament, one of those dispositions that finds it hard to forgive and impossible to forget. She had brought up her daughter according to a theory of her own, which consisted principally in striving to repress every natural impulse of the child, and forcing her to conform in every movement and thought to the stern outlines of this theory, a plan excellently adapted to make an abject slave or a bold rebel. In this case it caused rebellion. The daughter was of a quick, energetic disposition, full of animal spirits, which led her into frequent conflict with her mother. The latter sternly repressed all these outbreaks, becoming more determined after every victory, as if fearing that the reins of authority were loosening. Such a state of affairs could only have one termination. A successful revolt must eventually come, and the many victories of the mother terminate in one final defeat. It came at last, as it is apt to come, through the influence of that blind boy, Cupid, who has in all ages made so much mischief in the world.

"A young doctor, named Whitfield, was the object of Amelia's thoughts by day and of her nightly dreams. She had long known him, but never with the full approval of her mother. As the acquaintance of the two young people ripened into love the objections of the mother grew more decided. It ended in her becoming violently opposed to the doctor; not for any sufficient reason, for his character was of acknowledged excellence, and he had just graduated with honor from a medical college; but from the fact that he had formed the subject of many of the disputes between mother and daughter, so that the growing love of the latter was paralelled by a growing dislike in the former. Thus when at length the mother's determined effort to break off the acquaintance provoked Amelia to an acknowledgment of her love, a violent scene ensued. The mother characterized him as a poor, designing fortune-hunter, and vowed that under no conceivable circumstances should he touch a dollar of her money, and that if Amelia should dare disobey her wishes, she would thenceforth cast her out from her heart and home, leaving her to go as poor to her lover as he came to her. I should have mentioned that Mrs. Wilson was very wealthy, and that the poverty of Doctor Whitfield was her original objection to him as a suitor for her daughter."

"You might have forgotten to mention the whole story, for all it appears to concern, or for all it is likely to interest, any one here," growled Du Bar, with a shrug expressive of weariness of the whole affair.

"I think different," said Solomon. "I, for one, am getting interested in the story of this current of true love that didn't run smooth."

"Don't for mercy's sake, stop here!" said Nellie. "I won't let you off with a half-told story."

"I promise that you shall find that it interests you all, and concerns some of you closely," said Howard. He had not missed a glance of intelligence that passed between Du Bar and Miss Wilton, nor a slight trace of uneasiness in that lady's manner.

"There are several ways in which such circumstances might end. In this case the romantic ending was chosen. Love was of far more value than money in the young people's eyes, with visions of bliss in a cottage dancing before them. Finally, as there seemed no hope of winning the mother's consent, they took the foolish step of making a clandestine marriage. When this fact came to Mrs. Wilson's ears, she burst into a passion of appalling violence. She refused to see, or have any further intercourse with her daughter. The harsh mandate was given forth that the erring child should never again set foot within her mother's house, and the anger of the parent concluded in the making of a will that left her daughter penniless, the bulk of her property being willed to her nephew, and after him, to his son. This nephew had been the business agent for the old lady, and had been blamed for seeking to widen the breach between the mother and daughter. The doctor, after some vain efforts to establish a practice in Richmond, left the city, taking his wife, as it afterwards appeared, to the town of Canton in Illinois. But whither they had gone was utterly unknown to Mrs. Wilson, and seemingly so to all other parties concerned. Doctor Whitfield's parents had lately died, and he had no one who took a personal interest in his welfare, save one or two of his college friends. These persons corresponded with him for some time after his departure, while he was still on the look-out for a desirable location in which to settle; but the correspondence ceased before he became fixed in his habitation, so that no one knew where he had located. If any letters came from Amelia to her mother, they certainly did not reach her, and must have met with misfortune on the way. An epidemic fever, raging in the district containing the town of Canton, carried off both Dr. Whitfield and his wife, leaving a single child, a daughter, about a year old. Partial news of this fact, in some unexplained way, reached the mother's ears. It would not be strange had the authorities of the town written to her, but her knowledge of her daughter's death was unaccompanied with the knowledge of where it had occurred, or of the fact that she had left a daughter. It was simply information of the fact that Dr. Whitfield and his wife had died, no particulars being added. Yet there was something in the mode of receiving the information that induced her to believe it, and it seems to have worked on her conscience so strongly that she finally sent for her attorney and had him to change the will. She now bequeathed her property to the child or children of her daughter, Amelia Whitfield, if she had left any issue. In case there should prove to be no direct descendants, the property was to go, as before, to her nephew, Samuel Middleton. The making of this will was shortly followed by her death.

"The attorney, who was named principal executor, made every effort to fulfil the requirements of the will. Yet in some way the movements of Dr. Whitfield had become involved in mystery. The latest address from which any of his friends had received a letter was Chicago, and a strict inquiry there produced the information that he had started with the intention of crossing the plains to California. The field of inquiry was therefore shifted to this latter state. It was, however, difficult at that period to trace any one in the gold bearing state, but some information was obtained that seemed to point to the parties in question, and to the fact of their having died childless. This information was sufficient to convince the attorney that it was his duty to transfer the property to the second party named in the will. He accordingly obtained the necessary authority to declare Samuel Middleton heir to Mrs. Wilson, and to pass into his hands the title deeds and other documents relating to the property."

"Then how can you declare, after all this, that the parties left a daughter at the town of Canton in Illinois?" asked Du Bar, in an indignant tone, as if he felt a personal interest in the matter.

"My dear Mr. Du Bar, I have not finished yet," said Howard. "I have given you as yet but the first act in the drama."

"That's as much as I care to listen to. You can give your second act without me for audience, as I am tired of listening to your story."

"I am sorry if my prolixity has wearied you. I will try and finish with less attention to detail; but as I wish particularly that you should hear the remainder, I must request you to bear with me for a few moments longer." He fixed his eyes on Du Bar with a peculiar meaning that had a strong effect on that person. He sank back into the chair from which he had half risen, a slight pallor visible on his face to the keen glance of Mr. Howard. Miss Wilton, too, had grown perceptibly pale and ill at ease. The others unanimously called for a continuation of the story, and he therefore continued as follows:

"We will pass over eighteen or nineteen years, in which nothing of moment occurred. The attorney, however, during all this period was gradually becoming dissatisfied with his somewhat hasty settlement of the will. Further inquiries made in California threw doubt on the result of his previous investigation. Nothing definite occurred, however, until a few months ago, when, in a quarrel with Samuel Middleton, the latter inadvertantly let fall some hints which convinced the attorney that he had indeed made a mistake.

"He now feared that there was a child living, and that Middleton was aware of the fact, which he had villainously suppressed. In thinking how best he should satisfy his mind on this point, he naturally conjectured that if Middleton had indeed acted as he suspected, if the child were living, it must still be somewhere under his surveillance. Very probably he would have placed it in the hands of some agent of his, and possibly have changed its name. He remembered at this juncture that the Middletons had a small estate in North Carolina, which he had once visited in his youth in company with the father of Samuel Middleton."

Miss Wilton had grown so deathly pale during these last remarks that it attracted the attention of her niece, who had thus far been intently interested in Howard's narrative.

"Why, aunt," she cried, "what is the matter? You are as pale as death. Are you sick?"

"Yes," she replied feebly. "The heat of the room, or something, has strangely affected my head."

"Hadn't you better go out? Is there nothing I can get you for it?"

"Your aunt is getting better already," said Howard. "See, her color is returning. It was but a momentary attack. She will be well in a minute."

"Yes, yes, I will sit still. I feel better already."

"I can't see the improvement in your looks," muttered Solomon to himself.

"Well then to proceed. He decided to send an agent to the locality in question to see if anything in reference to the subject of his suspicions could be learned there. He selected his son to act as agent in the matter, having a father's fond confidence in the son's ability. The agent accordingly made his way to North Carolina, and had no sooner reached the district in which lay the property in question, than a peculiar influence seemed to surround him. He was at once made the object of a series of murderous assaults by a gang of outlaws inhabiting the district, assaults for which there was no apparent provocation, and which were continued with a persistency for which no cause appeared."

"In short then," asked Solomon, "Mr. Robert Howard is the attorney's son in question?"

"Exactly. We are bringing the matter down now to the interesting point of locality and personality. To continue in the first person, since you have penetrated my secret, I soon succeeded in discovering the location of the property in question, by dint of jogging my father's memory. But beyond that nothing was discovered, and I would have abandoned my quest utterly, in conviction that I was on the wrong scent, had it not been so evident that some parties had an interest in getting me out of the way. Knowing no sufficient reason for these attacks, and being able to conjecture but one, I concluded to stay where I was, in hopes something would turn up—or that I might have a chance to turn the tables on my foes."

He spoke with his eyes directed towards Du Bar. The face of the latter was as impervious as that of a marble statue, save that at these last words, an expression of chagrin crossed his features, only to be as instantly suppressed.

"And where is this place, if it's not asking too much?" said Solomon.

"It lies all around us; the fair domain over which rules as empress our hostess, Miss Brown."

A general stir of surprise followed these words; and it was apparent by the looks of the company that a sudden flood of interest in the story had set in.

"What! my place?" cried Nellie, animatedly. "You don't mean to say that such a romantic interest overhangs my dull plantation? But then it is nothing yet but a bare suspicion which has no reality, for there have certainly been no mysterious personages here for the last twenty years."

"I am not so positive of that," replied the narrator. "My story is not ended yet."

"Well, go on, go on! I am as anxious for the denouement as though it were the last new novel."

"The proprietor of this estate was not a Miss Whitfield, but a Miss Brown, had been a Miss Brown for a score of years, and about Miss Brown there seemed to be nothing mysterious whatever."

"Well, I should hope not," cried Nellie. "I hope that Miss Brown will keep clear of all things mysterious."

"She was the daughter of a Mr. Brown, formerly from Illinois; and it was easy to discover that a Mr. Thomas Brown had formerly resided in Canton, Illinois, and had migrated to North Carolina for his health, being then in a consumption. So far all was clear, no trace of a secret apparent."

"Nor is there any secret!" cried Miss Wilton, in a shrill, angry voice. "What is it that you are hinting at in connection with this house? A mystery? A crime? Do you come here to insult us, sir? I have lived here with my niece since her childhood, and know that there is no foundation for any of your hints. Why do you come here prying into our affairs, and then insult us with such an uncalled-for preamble, meaning nothing?"

"Why, Miss Wilton, have I not expressly declared that the very thought of a secret as connected with this house seemed absurd? Have I not cleared it from the suspicion that seemed to attach to it? Under these circumstances is it not as well that I should finish my story?"

"Yes! yes! go on!" cried all present.

The angry lady settled back in her chair in haughty indignation. She ventured a single glance at Du Bar, in which fright and anger were combined. But that gentleman was sitting nonchalantly back in his chair, drumming lightly on the window sill with his fingers, his eyes fixed nowhere in particular, apparently tired and heedless of the entire business.

"Yet," continued Howard, "the attempt upon Miss Brown's life looked as if she also were in the way. What had she done that her life should be practised upon? The clear case was again growing mysterious. Again, a letter of mine, containing some notes of progress in relation to this affair, was stolen. For what purpose? I only know that the assault on Miss Brown and myself was made immediately afterwards; as if the contents of this letter had frightened this hidden agent."

"Excuse me, Mr. Howard, for interrupting you," said the Squire, "in order to remark, as a man of some acquaintance with the law, that you are making out a strong case of circumstantial evidence. It only remains to be known against whom."

"No, I think there's something more remains," said Solomon. "The evidence isn't all afore the court yet."

"There are, indeed, a few more points I would like to present, or I should not have bored you so long with an incomplete story. My next discovery was made in the recording offices of the courts, at Lumberton. This was in the record of a deed of this property made by a Samuel Middleton to a Miss Ellen Brown. Nothing strange about this, you will say. I simply notice it as proving that this property had belonged to Mr. Middleton, a point on which I was not quite positive before. Moreover the consideration for this transfer of property was a ridiculously small sum of money. So small, in fact, that the sale was a virtual gift, as the consideration money did not equal a tithe of its value. You will not wonder, after this, that I continued on the ground, and on the lookout. I have now given you the state of affairs up to a very late date; my next evidence being dated no longer ago than yesterday. You all are aware that yesterday this house was robbed of some important papers?"

The interest of the listeners was now approaching excitement. They leaned forward without an answer, waiting anxiously for his next words.

"You know, moreover, that the box containing these papers was recovered, but that the most important of its contents had disappeared. It was naturally concluded that they had fallen into the hands of the robbers; particularly as they could not be found about the house."

"Certainly. They must have abstracted them," said Dr. Hamilton.

"They had not."

"Then where in the devil's name are they?" cried Du Bar, springing to his feet in fierce excitement. "If the robbers didn't steal them, who did? Have you stolen them?"

Miss Wilton had half risen to speak, pale as a ghost, but sunk back at the wild outbreak of her confederate.

"No, I have not stolen them," replied Howard, looking at him as calmly as if he was accustomed to being accused of theft.

"Then what do you mean?"

"I have not stolen them; but I have them," said Howard, rising in his turn, and confronting the other. "I could explain to the satisfaction of all how I came by them, but do not consider it necessary at present, for the simple reason that they did not rightfully belong to the party who had them in possession, and any of us have as rightful a claim to them."

"But, to the point, Mr. Howard, I am growing fearfully anxious to learn the contents of these papers," said the Squire.

"One of them is—"

"Hold, sir! You have no right to possess yourself of my private property," cried Miss Wilton. "I claim an instant return of those stolen documents, or I shall enter a charge against you for the theft."

"Very well, Miss Wilton, I am ready to meet your charge; and will add to my criminality by making their contents public."

"I call on you, gentlemen; I call on you, Squire Judson, for justice. It is your official business to prevent injustice. Protect me from this acknowledged thief."

"And I say," cried her niece, springing to her feet, with flashing eyes and rapid utterance, "that Mr. Howard shall proceed! There has been a crime—what it is, I know not; but, Aunt Wilton, I sadly fear that you are implicated in it. We must learn the contents of those papers. As mistress of this house, I will submit to no further interruptions." And she turned on her aunt with a leonine look, that quite cowed the latter. She sank back in her chair with a face pallid with fear or excitement. Du Bar, on the contrary, had recovered all his coolness. He was seated in the same careless attitude as before, drumming with his fingers on the sill, and looking sidewise out of the window.

"Proceed, Mr. Howard," continued the hostess, "such a story is nothing until finished. We must hear the end of it."

"And I, as an official, for the furtherance of the ends of justice, desire you to proceed," said the Squire.

"One of the papers was," said Howard, as imperturbably as if no interruption had been made, "a certificate of marriage between William Whitfield, of the city of Richmond, and Amelia Wilson, of the same city, dated September 7th, 1845, and made by a Baptist clergyman of that city."

"And the other?" cried Solomon, while all waited in breathless silence for the reply.

"The other recorded the birth of a child, a daughter, born in December of the ensuing year, in the town of Canton, Illinois, named Ellen, probably from the name of her grandmother. This record is on the recording page of a family Bible, which page has been torn out."

"But what is the inference from this?" asked the Squire, a shade of disappointment in his voice.

"Simply this. When I heard that Miss Brown's father came from Canton, I directed certain inquiries to be made in that town. I received yesterday a letter containing the information derived from this research, which only with great difficulty delved out the secrets of twenty years ago. It consists but of this fact, that Mr. and Mrs. Whitfield died and were buried in Canton, and that their daughter, being but an infant, and entirely destitute, was kindly taken in charge by a Mr. Thomas Brown. In corroboration I find upon the record of birth a statement in another handwriting to the same effect, with further particulars to the effect that Mr. Thomas Brown had finally settled with the child near the village of Burton, North Carolina, and that he had been paid by Mr. Samuel Middleton a certain sum of money, and had this estate settled upon the child, with the understanding that this child was to bear his name and be brought up as his daughter. So Miss Nellie Brown," he continued, turning to their fair hostess, who stood motionless, her breast heaving and falling with the heart-throb of intense excitement, a dazed look in her eyes, and her lips half-open in eagerness, "allow me to lift from you the borrowed name you have worn so long, and to hail you by your true title, as Ellen Whitfield, the heiress of an estate worth several hundred thousand dollars."

The excitement of the next few moments was indescribable. Had an equal fortune fallen to each one present they could not have displayed more gladness than that the favorite of the village had been so honored.

She was quiet, dreamily so, as if unable to recover from the shock of the sudden announcement. She had hardly a word in reply to the hearty hand shakings and congratulations of her friends. Solomon became so enthusiastic in his joy as to take her in his arms and imprint a hearty kiss upon her lips. With a vexed gesture she tore herself from him and ran from the room.

"The poor girl's lost her wits. You come on her too sudden, Howard," said Solomon.

"Well, you've done your work up brown, and no mistake. Here's my hand, my boy, and my heart with it, for you're a man after my heart."

"And let me add my congratulations," said Squire Judson. "You have managed it capitally. And to think that our little friend Nellie has fallen upon a new name and a fortune. Well she deserves it."

Another circle of hand-shaking succeeded, each one wishing to clasp Howard's hand as some relief from the excitement, which found vent as well in a hubbub of voices pitched in every imaginable key of delight and congratulation.

Miss Wilton had left the room in advance of her niece, escaping unseen during the buzz of excitement. Du Bar sat during this whole scene in sullen silence, glancing angrily with frowning eyes upon the animated throng, glaring especially upon Howard with looks that boded no good. He made no movement to take part in the congratulations offered to the two prominent persons in the scene, as if reckless of what might be thought of his action.

Solomon, becoming somewhat cooler, noticed this silent figure, glaring so revengefully upon Howard, who was still surrounded by a circle of loudly-talking friends.

His manner gave assurance to a suspicion which had long been creeping upon our shrewd friend, and he turned to Howard, remarking:

"By the way, Howard, if you'll excuse my interruption, let me say that your story's not done yet."

"Why, what remains?" asked Howard, disengaging himself from his animated surroundings.

"You said, true enough, that such matters as we've had here couldn't be done without hands and brains. This Middleton has known or guessed your business down here, and has been afeared of you. It's him has hired the Budds to get you out of the way. But he's had somebody on the ground with money in his pocket and eyes on your movements, or he couldn't hit as close as he's done. Now who is this agent?"

"Exactly. A very pertinent question. Are you aware of the name and locality of this person?" asked the Doctor.

"I am."

Howard's eyes turned on Du Bar with so stern a regard that the glances of all present followed the same direction. And despite the coolness of the latter, he could not suppress a slight start as this confident declaration was made.

"Sure?" cried Solomon, bending forward as if ready to spring on the culprit.

"Certain. I have the best of proof."

"Who is it then?"

"John Middleton. The son of Samuel Middleton."

An expression of surprise and disappointment passed over the face of the questioner, and he sank back in his chair like one giving up all interest in the case.

"Where is he?" "There's no such man about here?" he asked.

"John Middleton," repeated Howard, "alias Simon Du Bar."

"It is an infernal lie!" shouted the latter, leaping to his feet, with his right hand in his breast as if he would draw a weapon and spring on his accuser.

But the excitement was not confined to himself. All had leaped up at the same instant, and several persons stood between him and his intended victim.

"What, do you accuse this person of such murderous attempts?" cried the Squire, pointing to Du Bar, who stood with his back to the window, resting one hand on the sill, and breathing hard, as his eyes glared from one person to another, like those of a tiger at bay.

"I accuse him of several attempts to take my life. Of highway robbery. Of an attempt to murder Miss Brown. Of consorting with and aiding outlaws and murderers. Every word of this I am ready to repeat in court, and to prove by undeniable evidence. I charge likewise that Miss Wilton is privy to these attempts, and is his agent in the so long successful effort to rob Miss Whitfield of her property. I can produce a person who has overheard several conversations between these two criminals, and who first put me on the track of their evil partnership. I desire that John Middleton, or Simon Du Bar as he calls himself, be arrested and held to answer these serious charges."

"You've had your day, dog!" cried Middleton, white with rage. "But don't think that I have played my last card yet. I will have revenge for this. I know where to sting you. I will have revenge!"

"Arrest him!" cried Squire Judson to the constable, in commanding tones.

The latter advanced to obey, but was met by the culprit with a blow that stretched him prostrate upon the floor. The next instant, with a leap worthy of an athlete, he sprang through the open window by which he had been so long standing and disappeared in the gloom without.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

POLITENESS.

We have the notion that good-breeding comes from no place but the heart—can never be reconciled to any rule but that one, "Do as you would be done by," and throws its kindly influence over all hearts with which it comes in contact. But actions, when put to this test, often so sadly fail us, that we wonder if indeed the worst has not come, and goodness flown from the present years.

Once in a while our hopes revive, as we see some whose politeness, put to this test, does not fail. This *true* lady or gentleman is neither stiff nor formal—neither silly nor flattering—but possesses an independent kindness, which pervades manner, tone, action, and word as perceptibly as the fragrance of locust blossoms fills the dewy air of a summer morning. When this inherent quality peeps out, and we find the end of our search, how we love to watch it doing and saying the kindest things in the sweetest, sincerest manner.

For, for the man or woman who can take any hand in theirs—who can welcome from the illimitable good of their own heart the least portion of good they may discover in another—who can recognize a face, though it belong to one oblivious to fortune and unknown to fame—who can recognize all men as brethren, and only God as over all—whose charity, like the sky, covers all shortcomings—whose hope, like the sun, brightens and strengthens the humblest endeavor—for such a man or woman, there is surely a great satisfaction in knowing that the rich honor them, and the poor bless them; and a sweet reward for their unselfishness is the assurance that other men and women, guided by their influence, and blest with their example, shall follow their footsteps toward that rich recompense that cometh to those who meekly bear their own burdens, and lighten, by their love of doing good, the burdens of humanity.

DON'T BE SILLY.—Young man, young woman, don't be public fools. Don't let your love slop over in all places without discrimination. Let common sense go before your affection, and lead the way. Caressing is sort of angelic under some circumstances; but if the circumstances don't conspire, and the "fitness of things" seem to forbid, then it reveals the awkwardness of the donkey without his innocence.

Kissing and fondling, and tilting, and billing and cooing, in a miscellaneous assembly, in the lodge-room, in church, or on the street, may not be a proof of bad morals; but if not, it certainly evinces bad breeding and a bad vacuum in the upper story.

☞ The following notice, printed on colored cardboard, with a nice border, hangs up in a place of business in Rome, N. Y.:—"Mebbe you don't petter had loaf round here when you don't got some peesnis, ain't it?"

DAISY'S VALENTINE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Milton was neither a very large place nor were its people much given to social gayety; but nevertheless the Miltonites, especially the younger ones, managed to find amusement.

The first day of February was always eagerly anticipated by the latter class of Milton people. Crimping-pins and curling-tongs were in great demand among the fair sex on that day, for that night had been signalized for many years by the grand annual ball of the Damask Rose Literary Association.

The Damask Rose Association was an institution in Milton. It based its pretensions to literature on a library, consisting principally of Patent Office Reports; but balls were its speciality, and half the marriages of the year dated from flirtations that had taken place at the last Damask Rose.

It was the night of the first of February—about half-past seven o'clock. Margaret Osborne was standing before a mirror in the little parlor. Daisy she was usually called, and it seemed to suit her better than the stately name of Margaret. She was a *petite*, soft-eyed, sweet-voiced maiden, with a complexion like the petals of the field daisy, and a bloom on her cheeks that resembled the pink hue of its garden relative.

"He'll be here soon," she murmured, smiling and practicing a courtesy to her reflection in the glass. Any one who could have seen her would have said that she was heart-breakingly pretty in her simple red and white ball dress. To be sure her hair was puffed, or scrambled, or tucked up somehow in the prevailing (Milton) style, when it would have looked better worn in her every-day manner, but "each one to his taste," and perhaps Austen Rane, for whom she was waiting, thought differently.

"Dear me," she said, "kid gloves are a nuisance!" (Don't be shocked.) "I wish it were etiquette to wear woollen ones."

Sleigh bells sounded without. Daisy smiled a little and listened. There came a step on the wooden porch. Daisy ran to the door in a flutter of delight and rose-colored ribbons.

Austen Rane came in—a hearty, pleasant-looking young man. His eyes expressed his admiration as he stopped short to take a long look at the young lady.

"Isn't it very cold, Mr. Rane?" asked Mrs. Osborne from the next room.

"Freezing," returned Austen, laconically. He was not given to many words.

"You'd better wrap up warmly, Daisy;" and with this maternal injunction, Mrs. Osborne returned to her book. Daisy proceeded to adjust a very coquettish hood on her head.

A knock at the door. It opens softly.

"May I come in?" says a rather cracked voice.

"Certainly," responds Daisy, her utterance somewhat impeded by half a dozen pins, which she artistically manages to hold in her mouth. It is only Belinda Briggs come to spend the evening with mother. But a glance at Belinda's costume dispels this delusion. Miss Briggs wears a trained dress of white silk, an overdress of pink gauze, looped with large red roses, and a huge pink feather. Miss Briggs looks extremely splendid, but rather bony; Miss Briggs knows the former, but ignores the latter, so she is in the best of tempers.

Miss Briggs is an old maid, or rather a middle-aged maid. She is not nice, as middle-aged maids generally are; she is decidedly otherwise, and she intends, we will use her own expressive words, to cut Daisy out, and captivate the unsuspecting Austen.

"I hope she don't expect to go with us," thinks Daisy, her heart sinking.

But she does, and she begins sweetly:

"Good-evening, Daisy; good-evening, Mr. Rane. I've come to ask a favor of you. I've been disappointed—*awfully*. I had an invitation to the Damask Rose," (lie No. 1) "but the gentleman who was to accompany me has sent word that he has been suddenly prostrated by a violent attack of—" (she was going to say scarlet fever, but substituted headache) "a very violent attack of headache. Now, I don't want to lose my night's pleasure, and if you will give me a seat in your sleigh, I'll be ever so much obliged!"

"There's no room," stammers Austen.

Daisy, although she despises impoliteness, is sufficiently inconsistent to give Austen a look of gratitude for this rude speech.

"I won't mind that. I can squeeze in anywhere," says Belinda. "If my dress isn't rumpled, I won't care in the least."

"But your dress will be crushed," Daisy responds.

"Well, 'what can't be cured must be endured,' you know. I'll go at any rate."

Daisy mentally quoted the proverb, too; and the three went out and crowded into the sleigh.

The Damask Rose ball had no distinctive feature of its own, except that there was less constraint and more merriment than is usually the case in such assemblies. The dancers really danced; they did not walk through the figures as if they were attending the funeral of some dear departed. The waltz and polka being acquired tastes, had not yet reached unsophisticated Milton; in consequence the programme was made principally of country dances, full of life and spirit.

Miss Briggs hung on poor Austen's arm during the entire evening. She never left him for a moment. He made many futile attempts to get rid of her—even at supper she held his arm with one hand, while she helped herself to various substantial edibles with the other.

Daisy, however, was not altogether deserted. Partners by the dozen claimed her hand; and, though the enjoyment of the evening was partially spoiled by Austen's captivity, yet she managed to draw some honey from the damask rose.

Miss Briggs insisted on going home with them in the sleigh. This was the unkindest cut of all to Austen. He had purposed to say some particular words to Daisy—some words to which Daisy would have probably said, "Ask mamma." Perhaps Miss Belinda had guessed his intention, and had taken this mode of destroying his opportunity.

Austen reined in the horse before Miss Brigg's door.

"No, no, I won't get out," she said, sweetly; "I couldn't think of getting out before dear Daisy—we'll drive her home first."

"*We*," thought Austen; "she is already taking possession of me. How can I get rid of her?"

After having left Daisy at home, Austen seriously thought upon the feasibility of making the horse run away. But Miss Belinda got out at her own door and bade him an affectionate good-night, so that alternative was rendered unnecessary.

* * * * *

It was certain that when Austen Rane would marry, there would be a comfortable home to which to bring his wife. His father had left him the best farm of any around Milton.

He was sensible and steady. He had never been given to sowing wild oats, but of the other sort he had sown plentiful crops, and the farm had doubled in value since he had come to own it.

It was the thirteenth of February, and he sat alone at his desk in the spacious parlor of the farm. He was chewing the end of a penholder, and reflecting.

"She'll marry me, in spite of myself," he soliloquized, "if I don't shut her up. I can't tell her I don't want her, right out plain. I couldn't speak so to any woman; but such a sly, dodging, persecuting old maid don't deserve civility. I'll just write her a sharp note.

"To-morrow will be the fourteenth of February. I'll send Daisy a valentine. There's a right smart one in Brown's store. It's got two doves pecking at a heart, surrounded by a wreath of white daisies. The heart opens, and shows a gilt wedding-ring. "I'll send Hiram for it. Hi-ram!"

"All right!" and the chore-boy's red head appeared in the door.

Austen explained what he wanted, and the boy started off, soon returning with the valentine. It was a truly gorgeous affair, and there was a blank leaf, upon which the sender might write poetry. Austen leaned on his elbows, trying to think of something to write.

"'If you love me as I love you,'" he muttered; "but that won't do. Love rhymes with dove." This was indisputable, but it did not seem to help him much.

> "This ring is round
> As round can be,
> So endless is
> My love for thee.

"Pshaw! Poets work harder than we farmers, I should think.

> "Beautiful one,
> Like thee there's none
> Under the sun—

"That's true!

> "Sure as a gun.

"No, won't do!

> "Blue-eyed flower, fair as light!
> How I love thee, heart's delight!

"Just it!" And he proceeded to write, fearing that the inspiration would leave him, if not seized on the instant.

"Now, I'll settle the other one." Taking a sheet of paper, he began:—

"Miss:—I take my pen in hand to rid you of a delusion. I do not wish you to trouble me with your attentions, as I am about to engage myself to another young lady.

"Yours to command,

"AUSTEN RANE.

"Milton, Feb. 13, 18—.

"Sharp and short, *I* call it," he commented; "but self-preservation is nature's first law, or something to that effect."

He drew two large envelopes from the desk. On one he wrote, in his best style, "Miss Margaret Osborne," on the other, "Miss Belinda Briggs."

"Old Jinks has come about the colt," announced Hiram.

Austen hastily placed the valentine and the note each in an envelope, and went down to the stable to see old Jinks, telling Hiram to deliver the envelopes according to the directions. Hiram obeyed him.

But in Austen's hurry he had made a slight mistake. He had placed the valentine in Miss Briggs's envelope, and the note in Daisy's. A mistake indeed!

"Somethin' for you, Miss Daisy," said Hiram, grinning.

"Probably a valentine from—somebody," said Mrs. Osborne, smiling significantly, as Daisy entered the parlor with the envelope.

Daisy tore open the envelope. Happily Mrs. Osborne was not of a curious nature; she saw the blood rush to her daughter's cheeks and the fire to her eyes, but she concluded to keep silence, and wait until Daisy should see fit to tell her the cause of this unusual agitation.

Daisy ran up to her room, and burst into tears. She read and re-read that unfortunate note.

"He takes his pen in hand to rid *me* of a delusion," she murmured. "Oh, indeed! Some people possess a great deal of self-conceit. He does not wish *me* to trouble *him* with my *attentions!* Well, I thought that Austen Rane was honest and true. I never imagined he would," sobbing, "insult me in this way. 'He is about to engage himself to another young lady.' Belinda Briggs, I suppose. No, it can't be she, for he says 'Young.' I wish her joy whoever she is," Daisy concluded.

"Miss Briggs is in the parlor. Wants to see you," called Mrs. Osborne.

Daisy wiped her eyes, and went down.

"I've something sweet to tell you," began Miss Belinda, simpering. "I hardly know how to commence. I've just received a valentine. Such—a—lovely—one! Oh my!" and she displayed Austen's valentine. Daisy read the two lines of verse in Austen's well-known, stiff handwriting, but she resolved not to show the pain it gave her. "I cannot imagine from whom it came," continued Belinda, (she knew very well.) "I shouldn't wonder if he'd propose next. He! he! he!"

"I shouldn't be surprised at anything now," returned Daisy, the tears somehow getting into her voice.

"He's a real poet. How true to nature! Listen—

> 'Blue-eyed flower fair as light!'

My eyes are blue. I didn't think he had noticed it.

> 'How I love thee, heart's delight!'

That's really too much."

Daisy also thought it was 'too much.'

"Good-by, love. I'll call again soon." And Miss Brigge marched from the room, triumphantly conscious that she had planted a dagger in Daisy's breast.

When evening came, Daisy had recovered her self-possession. She was alone in the parlor, reading. The door opened, and Austen entered.

Daisy nodded stiffly. She was astounded by his impudence. He was dressed in a new blue suit with brass buttons. He seemed to be in a hopeful state of mind. How dared he come near the house at all?

"What's up now," he thought, responding to Daisy's nod by asking, "Did you get a valentine, Daisy?"

"I received *yours*, sir."

"Wasn't it fine? I think it was right smart. How did you know who sent it?"

"Your boy, Hiram, brought me the note, sir, and, if I had not recognized him, your signature was plain enough."

"I didn't sign my name to it."

"I suppose you'll deny that you wrote the note next."

"What note?"

"*That* note." She gave him the missive with an air of great dignity.

He looked at it. Then he began to laugh, and he never ceased until two bright buttons flew off his new vest. Daisy stood near him, looking at him with speechless indignation.

"This note was intended for Miss Briggs," he managed to say at last, "the envelopes must have got changed. I'll bet she got your valentine!"

His explanation lightened Daisy's heart. And when he said, "You'll have to marry me, Daisy, or Miss Briggs will grab me," Daisy answered, "Yes."

Miss Belinda threatened to bring a suit against Austen, for blighting her young heart. She visited a lawyer, to see whether the verses on the valentine were actionable or not. It is presumed they were not, as Milton was never disturbed by any such suit.

☞ Until he was promoted to be adjutant, Scroggs never could see the value of the injunction, "Fire low!" But as soon as he got to be a staff officer, and had to ride a high horse, he says he at once appreciated the correctness of the principle.

☞ A too confiding damsel of 71 has sued an Adonis of 80 for breach of promise in Illinois.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

NORTH CAROLINA.

REWARD FOR THE CAPTURE OF OUTLAWS.

RALEIGH, Jan. 27.—The Legislature has authorized a reward of ten thousand dollars for the arrest of Henry B. Lowry, and five thousand dollars for each of his gang of outlaws, or thirty-five thousand dollars in all.

This modern Fra Diavolo and his gang of thieving scamps, are the same, which, with a little embellishment, figure so prominently in our popular serial, "THE SWAMP OUTLAWS; OR, A SECRET OF TWENTY YEARS."

If our old North State exchanges are to be believed, this scoundrel recently dined with a party of gentlemen who knew him well; indeed the sable robber took no pains to conceal his identity. "Before entering the dining-room he divested himself of his many weapons, which he carelessly deposited on a chair in the piazza." He discussed his soup, and meats, and wines, at leisure, and with a thorough relish. Strange to say, no "Zerlina" was at hand to render the repast more pleasant by song. "But none of the company would lay a finger on the scoundrel with whom they were breaking bread, because they knew his band was near at hand."

It is time, when affairs reach this stage, that something decisive was done, and we are glad to see the Legislature of the state has taken the matter in hand, and offered the above liberal reward. The facetious bandit will probably be more cautious in the selection of his dinner parties in the future. The presence of his gang will only add additional inducement for his own capture or taking off, for the desperadoes under his control are valued at $5,000 each. Here is a rare chance for brave North Carolinians to achieve a modest competence and do the public a service at the same time.

GREAT STORM IN THE WEST.

The late storm on the northwestern plains was very severe, and caused loss of life. Patrick and Michael Jordan, father and son, who went out for a load of wood, were caught in the storm and perished a few miles north of Sioux City, Iowa. Three Hollanders were frozen to death at Rock River, in Sioux county on Sunday. Several persons are also reported frozen near Vermilion, Dakota. Two boys perished at Lodi, and two men at Turkey Creek. Other deaths are reported, but particulars have not been received. The storm is described as of "unprecedented severity," and the cold was intense. The snow has interrupted railroad travel in every direction.

THE MORMON QUESTION.

Notwithstanding the movements of the Mormons for the calling of a convention to frame a constitution and state government, there is no prospect of the admission of Utah into the Union. A number of members of Congress say that under no circumstances will any Territory having a less population than the federal ratio for a representative be admitted, the population of Utah and other Territories being under that number of inhabitants. Private letters received state that the Gentiles and liberal Mormons are strongly opposed to the admission of Utah, as they apprehend that the Mormons in such case would injure the mining and other interests of those who are opposed to them. It is said by parties supposed to be acquainted with the Mormon programme, that in their constitution they will make no provision for the suppression of polygamy, leaving Congress to propose a condition precedent and which they will then consider.

THE TROTTING OF "GOLDSMITH MAID."

PROVIDENCE, R. I., Feb. 1—The Board of Appeals of the American Trotting Association, to which was referred the appeal of S. D. Bruce and others, for a decision respecting the validity of the record of 2.17, claimed by the bay mare, "Goldsmith Maid," at Milwaukee, September 6, 1871, decided that said Cold Spring course, on the day of said race, exceeded one mile in length, measured in the manner required by article 19 of the by-laws; that "Goldsmith Maid" won the race in three heats, of which the time as taken by the judges, and properly placed on the record of the association, was severally 2.21½, 2.17, 2.21¼; that the proof is conclusive that in each heat of the race "Goldsmith Maid" trotted fairly and performed a full mile; that the judges of said race employed the assistance of all necessary persons to enable them to properly understand and judge the race in all its parts; that the knowledge which they thus possessed of performance as affecting the decision of the race which they have recorded were not, in any reasonable sense, invalidated in consequence of the interruption of their personal view of part of the course caused by objects occupying the range of their vision. For these reasons we confirm the validity of the record produced by the association which establishes that "Goldsmith Maid," in the second heat of said race, trotted a mile in 2.17.

SUMMARY OF THE BUFFALO RAID.

The statistics of the G. D. Alexis in his recent raid on the buffalo of the excessive West, put in tabular form, foots up:

G. D.—Buffaloes, old	2
" " calf	1
General Sheridan	2
"Shorty"	3
"Buffalo William"	40
Other slaughterers	8
Total	56

Grand powwow at the close. G. D. presented warriors $50 in half dollars, twenty blankets, and eight jackknives; Sheridan gave Spotted Tail scarlet cap, belt, and s—a—[shirt.] In the evening they hilarified, took something warm, and dropped off into fine old snore.

RAILWAY ACCIDENT.

A horrible accident occurred on the morning of Feb. 1st on the Lehigh Valley Railroad, near Lockport. As the Buffalo express train was nearing that point a rail broke, precipitating the train over an embankment about fifty feet high, wrecking the cars, which were set on fire by the stoves. Four of the passengers were instantly killed, and four more have since died from their injuries, and at least twenty others are more or less wounded.

SHOOTING CASE.

At Washington, Pa., on the afternoon of Feb. 1st, Professor Wilson, principal of the Union School, was shot and dangerously wounded by a youth of 17, named Thomas McGiffin. The professor had refused to deliver a note to a young girl in the school, and ordered McGiffin off the premises, hence the shooting.

CITY ELECTION.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 31.—At the election in the Fourth Senatorial District of this city, yesterday, the returns as received show the following result:—H. W. Gray, Republican, 12,373; A. K. McClure, Independent Republican, 11,433; majority for Gray, 940. McClure designs contesting Gray's election as fraudulent.

ITEMS.

The Grand Duke Alexis explored the Mammoth Cave on Thursday, Feb. 1st.

The small-pox is increasing in Chicago.

The United States Senate has passed the bill allowing Japanese students to be admitted to the West Point Academy.

Stokes has written numerous affectionate letters to Josie since his arrest—but she refuses to answer them, or have anything more to do with him. He's played out.

The steamship City of Halifax, on Monday, Jan. 29, while out from Newfoundland, passed seventy miles of field ice.

A whole family was poisoned at Sutton, Vermont, a few days since, from drinking water which ran through a new lead pipe. They were all very sick, and one of them nearly died.

A Vermont hermit was found dead from exposure, recently, at the foot of Stratton Mountain, where he had lived for thirty years in a hole dug in a hill, with no companion save his dog and hens.

FOREIGN NEWS.

GREAT BRITAIN.

SEA VOYAGE FOR THE PRINCE OF WALES.

LONDON, Jan. 28.—The Prince of Wales contemplates a sea voyage as soon as pleasant weather sets in.

The royal yacht Victoria and Albert is now being refitted for the Prince's convenience, and during the month of April his royal highness will embark for a cruise in the Mediterranean and to Madeira Islands.

The Prince of Wales's thanksgiving ceremonies at St. Paul's, London, are set for the 27th inst. The cathedral is being handsomely decorated.

In accordance with the directions of the late Mr. Peabody, the trustees of the Peabody Fund have let out to small families 500 houses with planted grounds attached, in a southern suburb of London.

Active measures are being taken in London to raise means whereby the expedition which is to go to the relief of the African explorer, Dr. Livingstone, may be properly equipped.

M. Catacazy arrived at Liverpool on Tuesday, Jan. 30.

London has fifty-nine workingman's clubs, where refreshments are served at low prices.

London telegrams indicate possible complications between England and Russia, growing out of alleged intrigues of England against Russian encroachments on Central Asia. It is affirmed that a bearer of important despatches has arrived at Bokhara, from Calcutta. The greater part of the Anglo-Indian army is said to be moving northward, which leads to the foregoing suppositions.

KILLED BY A LION.

The Bolton correspondent of the London Daily Eagle, telegraphs under date of Jan. 3: "Last night, Massarti, the lion-tamer, at Mander's Menagerie, now exhibiting in this town, was torn to pieces by the lions with whom he was performing. He struck one of the lions on the nose, slipped on his feet and armless side, and one of the lions immediately seized him by the scalp, and tore it almost off. The other lion then sprang upon him, and tore off the flesh completely from the lower part of his back and thighs, and inflicted serious injuries upon his chest, breaking also his right and only arm. The excitement in the show was so intense that the slides dividing the cage could not be got in. One of the lions then dragged their victim from the separate compartment back to the infuriated group, who again set upon him. The partitions were at last got up. The mangled body of the lion-tamer was then recovered and taken to the infirmary, where, however, he died in ten minutes.

FRANCE.

Extraordinary measures are being adopted in France to pay the war indemnity to the Germans.

Of Communists captured, 19,222 have been liberated, 3,473 sentenced to various punishments, and 12,045 are still in custody at the naval stations of France.

Joseph Lemaitre, a Frenchman, is being tried at Calais for having committed twenty-nine murders.

The director of the official journal published at Paris under the Commune, has been sentenced to transportation.

A foreign writer thinks that it was not the French soldiers who lost the battles in the recent war, but it was to the almost absolute default of military ability in the highest quarters that we must look for the causes of frustrated operations, crushing defeats and enormous captures.

Americans, say our latest foreign mail advices, have taken full possession of the upper social world of Paris. Not to have the *entire* to the refined American circle of the Parisian social world is not to be in society at all in the French capital just now.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS.

Italy's complete census was taken at midnight of December 31.

A new religious journal has been established at Rome, which will oppose the dogma of infallibility, and Pere Hyacinthe is to be one of the contributors.

Some Students at Moscow who signed the address in favor of the liberty of the press, have been, without exception, banished to Siberia.

Eight thousand soldiers have just left Cadiz, Spain, for Cuba.

The German authorities have prohibited the sale of French journals in the streets of Strasburg.

The Pope's illness is not thought to be serious, though he is in the eightieth year of his age.

ST. PETERSBURG, Jan. 29.—Intelligence was received here to-day of the total destruction yesterday by an earthquake of Schamachi, a town of Asiatic Russia, Trans-Caucasia. From the few details received of this terrible disaster it is learned that the shocks were very protracted, and that many lives were lost. The number is not stated.

TURKEY'S IMPROVEMENTS.

Turkey is showing great zeal in extending internal improvements, by building railways, improving navigation, and in many ways aiding the means of communication throughout that country. The custom not very long ago was for the Turkish Government to spend all the money that could be got in keeping up armies, navies, and fortifications against the Russians. These, with the aid given by the Western Powers, usually accomplished that object, but the effort monopolized all the energy of Turkey. Now, however, there is a change, and it is gratifying to know that at least a few dollars of Turkish money are spent for some other purpose than thwarting the Czar.

GOLD FEVER IN AUSTRALIA.

The gold fever seems to have broken out with great virulence in Australia during the past autumn and present winter. Late letters from Melbourne state that the colony of Victoria is passing through one of the most extraordinary fevers of mining speculation that it has ever known. Thousands are flocking to the mines, hotels being unable to accommodate anything like the number which needs lodging. Shares in different mines are disposed of at enormous prices, and everybody is in a state of wonderful excitement.

The cause of this outburst of enterprise in the twentieth year of the greatest Australian gold field is to be found in the fact that, contrary to the opinion of Sir Roderick Murchison and other eminent geologists, the reefs or deposits of gold, instead of running out at a depth of one hundred feet, are found to be exceedingly rich at depths exceeding seven hundred feet. These rich reefs are to be found in every part of the colony of Victoria.

☞ COME TO HAND.—A lady of our acquaintance, who has a pretty hand, is anxious to learn whether people are more liable than common to "burn their fingers" if they happen to be taper ones. We cannot say, but we have advised her not to let a spark get at them.

☞ Omaha is proud of having a distant cousin of the Grand Duke permanently settled as pianist in one of its lager-bier saloons.

☞ Duluth is a small but ambitious town on the borders of the frigid zone, where the thermometer is always falling below zero. It has already two papers and a rivalry among editors. One of these Duluth editors hurls at the other the following epithets in the course of one-third of a very short column: "Squaw doctor," "venerable liar," "shaky old scoundrel," a "cobra," "cowardly liar and slanderer," "bar-room sot," "medical imposter," "dead beat," "deep-dyed villain," and "egotistical old quack."

☞ A Detroiter who laughed at a man who had slipped down on an icy sidewalk, was promptly knocked over by that individual.

PHILADELPHIA CATTLE MARKET.

The supply of Beef Cattle during the past week amounted to about 2000 head, and sold at 7½@8½c. 300 Cows brought $45@60 ₩ head. Sheep—15,000 head were disposed of at 5½@6c. ₩ lb. 4000 Hogs sold at $2,25@7 ₩ 100 lbs net.

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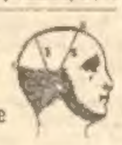

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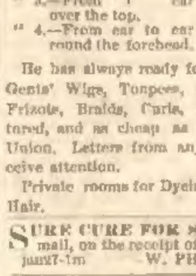

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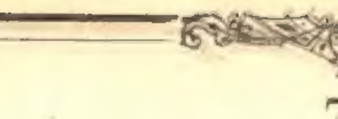

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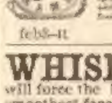

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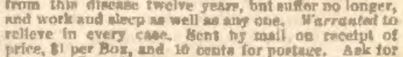

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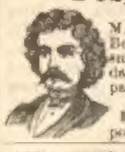

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WIT AND HUMOR.

THE VIRTUES OF NITRO-GLYCERINE.

The boys don't do things now like they did when Noah Webster was making spelling books. An old man near Pleasantville, the other day, found a rude boy posting Lydia Thompson bills all over his door-yard fence, and desired him to desist; but the young sauce-box told him plainly he would not, and slapped up another naughty picture.

"You won't," said the old man; "then I will fetch you down." So he pulled out a horse-pistol and shot several times at him; but this only made the youngster laugh; for the old man was cross-eyed and could not hit a barn-door. "Well, well," said the old man, "if neither words nor horse-pistol will do, I must try what virtue there is in nitro-glycerine;" so, that old man pulled out a two-quart can of torpedo mixture, and exploded it under the chap, who coolly whistled, "If Ever I Cease to Love," while the old man went soaring away into the sky like a kite.

VENTRILOQUISM EXPLAINED.

A certain professor of legerdemain and ventriloquism, about commencing his performance at Hannibal, Mo., bethought him that this town was far away from the centres of civilization, and that it would be well to precede his exhibition with a few graceful words of explanation and warning, to promote application and to prevent any possible fright on the part of the ladies. "Ladies and gentlemen," said he, "you must not be frightened by what you hear, nor imagine that it is done by sperits. You'll hear a voice sometimes up atop of the chimney and sometimes down in the sullar, but don't be skeered; the sounds ain't up thar, nor down thar. I make 'em all myself away deep down," suiting the action to the word, "in my in'ards, and that's the reason why they're called gut-tural sounds." This explanation was received with great enthusiasm.

HARD ICE.

Deacon Johnson is a great temperance man, and sets a good example of total abstinence as far as he is seen.

Not long ago he employed a carpenter to make some alterations in his parlor, and in repairing the corner near the fireplace it was found necessary to remove the wainscotting, when, lo! a discovery was made that astonished everybody. A brace of decanters, a tumbler, and a pitcher, were coolly reposing there as if they had stood there from the beginning.

The deacon was summoned, and as he beheld the blushing bottles, he exclaimed:

"Well, I declare, that is curious, sure enough. It must be that old Bains left them when he went out of this 'ere house thirty years ago."

"Perhaps he did," returned the carpenter, "but deacon, the ice in the pitcher must have been friz mighty hard to stay till this time."

HOTEL PRICES.

A disgusted traveller gives the following schedule of hotel prices, as he has found them:

To lie down one night, $1; to sit up over night, $1; to eat, $1; to stand 15 minutes with back to the stove, 50 cents; to go where there is a stove, 25 cents; to shave as a stranger, 25 cents; to shave as a citizen, 15 cents; half-soling shoes, $2; gin and milk, 25 cents; plain gin, 50 cents; plain wash, 10 cents; with soap and towel, 40 cents; to look out of the window, 10 cents: three looks out of the window for a quarter. If you have all your baggage in your coat pocket, the porterage is 50 cents.

A SETTLER!

Uncle Van Meter, a colored philosopher of Barkersville, Me., was once a witness in a horse case. The counsel had examined and cross-examined him until he was almost distraught, when the presiding judge, fixing his luminous eye upon him, and making the peculiar preliminary intonations for which he was remarkable, proceeded to ask him a question. Van Meter, amazed at an attack from such a quarter, drew himself up to his full height, and raising his voice to its loftiest falsetto, shouted: "My friend! don't you say a word—I have got as much as I can do to attend to these two men down he-nh—" turning to them with a despairing look. After an instant, perceiving that he had produced an impression, he turned again to the Judge and said, "As soon as I have done with them, I will attend to your case."

A BIG SWIM.

A Yankee having told an Englishman that he shot, on one particular occasion, 1999 snipe, his interlocutor asked him why he didn't make it a thousand at once. "No," said he; "it's not likely I'm going to tell a lie for one snipe." Whereupon the Englishman, determined not to be outdone, began to tell a story of a man having swam from Liverpool to Boston. "Did you see him yourself!" asked the Yankee, suddenly. "Why, yes, of course I did; I was coming across, and our vessel passed him a mile out of Boston harbor." "Well, I'm glad ye saw him, stranger, cos yer a witness that I did it. That was me!"

Two young princes, the sons of the Archduke Charles of Austria, had a warm dispute in the presence of no less a person than that of the august Emperor himself. Greatly excited, one said to the other,

"You are the greatest ass in Vienna!"

Highly offended at a quarrel in his presence, the Emperor interrupted them, saying, with indignation,

"Come, come, young gentlemen—you forget that I am present."

A GENTLEMAN of something over forty years of age, by the name of Page, found a young lady's glove and handed it to her, saying:

"If from the glove you take the letter G,
The glove is love, and that I give to thee."

Her answer was:

"If from the page you take the letter P,
Then page is age, and that won't do for me."

THIS is how a New England drunkard put on his hat when the wind blew it into the gutter: He knelt down slowly, like a superannuated camel, and inserted his head into it, pressed it firmly down with his head against the curbing, and then arose with a sort of ridiculous majesty and the broad smile of big success parting his lip.

A JANESVILLE (Wis.) paper says the girls of that town "sleep with their corsets on." When those Wisconsin girls take a notion to be squeezed they are going to be, even if they have to have it done by machinery.

THE following questions are proposed for discussion in the literary societies:—

How many is five? and why?
What are ducks? and how?
Is it or is it not? and whence?

PURCHASER—"K-a-t-l is not the way to spell 'Cattle.'"

Drover (writing the receipt)—"Nasbody could spell wi' this pen. There's been owre mony drunken bodies usin' it."

A LONG ISLAND farmer has sued his wife for divorce, because, after going to New York and listening to a lecture in favor of free love, she insisted upon hailing every man who passed the house and inviting him in to have a talk.

Leaves from a Pocket Diary.

No. 12.

THE GAMBLING SALOON.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY CAPTAIN CARNES.

It fell out that Stebbins and I were to go to Stockton for supplies, and not particularly relishing the journey myself, I was somewhat surprised when Rawdon came outside and declared his intention of "putting in an appearance" with us. Stebbins, who was a rather sociable fellow, always whistling or singing to himself, if there was no interesting conversation going on, was delighted with the prospect. He could draw Rawdon out of his somewhat reticent manner, and get him directly ambling off towards New Mexico, or some other field of adventure—figuratively you know, and then Rawdon could engage the attention of the most abstracted person among us.

Acquaintance proved Rawdon older than I at first supposed, he being turned of forty, and he had been jogging about the world since his twenty-fifth year.

He had told me, in confidence, that he started out in life with the firm intention of becoming a poet, but,

Like many an other aspirant
For high exalted fame,
He went to mount his Pegasus,
And found—*the beast was lame.*

Leastwise, he fell from his sublime heights, heels over head, to the matter-of-fact world.

The world didn't and wouldn't let him sing to it; so he said facetiously that if, in his silence, the world had lost stirring music, it had itself to blame.

He had rambled around the world moderately well on the proceeds of two or three volumes of travels, but owed his "balance due" to the dowry of a deluded bachelor uncle, who firmly believed that Rawdon was destined to be the—I give it in Rawdon's own pronunciation—"Aw-roarer Beau-real-is," among other literary lights of the day.

Anyway he possessed a poet's eye, and a skull development that should have sent him to sit with legislative Conkers. We enjoyed a fine ride to Stockton, although Stebbins, I must say, was not the best horseman in the world; and without regard to his morals, I will say that he was the *loosest* rider I ever saw. When the mule came down, he went up; and during her steadiest pace, he seemed to be hunting all over her back for the easiest place to sit down. But as he was a trifle sensative upon the subject, we all tried to keep the eye next him well closed

We got into Stockton, and found the place swarming with miners, traders, trappers, and that mixed multitude found only in new countries.

Something like overgrown boys we stalked about to see the sights; and the second evening after our arrival, we strayed towards the eastern part of the town. By-and-by we came opposite a saloon, whose prodigality of lights in the windows and silence in the near interior, bespoke, to the initiated, a gambling saloon.

I am positive that Rawdon was the first to halt. Stebbins came around toe to toe with him in an instant.

"Now, boys," said he, "do you know yourselves?"

What possessed him to say this is more than I can tell, unless he was what is now termed an impressible medium.

"Because," he went on, "that door is the gate-way to perdition, if you have the latent taint of gambling in you. Now I am safe enough. All that I know about cards is, I can tell when a fellow turns out a trump—like yourself, Rawdon; and I can tell, too, when any one attempts to play the deuce with me—that is all."

But Rawdon, with a light laugh at Stebbins's harrangue, was already entering the place.

A thick-set fellow, with a blotched face, opened an inner door and motioned toward the interior. We entered. A heavy canopy of tobacco smoke hung in dismal wreaths overhead. There was here and there a word or two being spoken among the rough row of men that lined the long table. Such a fierce, infernal set of faces, on the whole, one need not be covetous of seeing often; though I have no doubt but that going from one to another, and pausing by each, some redeeming face would flash upon the gaze, and sustain the belief that those present were men, not satyrs or fiends. Detecting new-comers, they made room for us to approach and sit down. Rawdon accepted a seat, so did I, but Stebbins held to a standing posture behind my chair. The momentary interruption of our entrance passed off, and the play went on.

Scarcely a word was spoken, only brief ejaculations, such as might emanate from the throats of hyenas. Now, the sounds might signify triumph at winning; now, despair at overwhelming loss. There was the frequent scuff, scuff, of leathern pouches changing owners, and making short passages from old to new possessors.

Now and then a shower of coin would go down upon the table, like the sudden smash of rock crystal; then the slif, slif, slif of shuffled cards, and the rasping of the small rakes which hauled the coins forward, or shoved them back, as they changed ownership.

I was running my glance along the lines, trying to detect a familiar face among the scores of men, when the grip of Stebbins's hand upon my shoulder, revealed that that individual had made some strange or startling discovery. My eyes finished their journey around the table in a flash, and came back to rest, spell-bound, upon the face of Rawdon.

On the instant, I was converted to a belief in metamorphoses. The man beside me was not the man who entered with us. His face was white, the veins on his temples stood out like whipcords, his eyes were darkened and dilated, his teeth showing a little between his parted lips—all combined to give me a shock more forcible than agreeable. Rawdon was *a gambler*. The fierce Spanish-Mexican opposite had instantly divined the fact, and they were in the first moves of a game when I caught sight of our companion's face.

"Is it best to speak to him?" Stebbins whispered hoarsely in my ear.

Speak to him. As far as one would have been heard, or heeded, he might as well have spoken to the stone ear of the Sphynx. As far as a knowledge of CARD-ing was concerned, I was precisely in Stebbins's predicament. Shovels and spades were alike to me, as were heads and hearts, or diamonds and paste; but I was, just then, hardly less interested in what was going on than if I had been educated to "tricks that are vain."

No word was spoken. Still this card descended upon that card like a hawk upon its prey; and now the black danbs had it, and now the red. But I watched the faces of the two men to note the progress of the game more narrowly than I watched the greasy pasteboard. Soon globules of sweat appeared along Rawdon's forehead, from which the hat was well pushed back. The game resulted so that one of Rawdon's two pouches of dust was transferred to the pocket of the Spaniard.

"Take hold of him and rouse him, Carnes," whispered the monitor at my chair back, who seemed so frightened at the turn affairs had taken as to be unable to act himself.

RATHER A SUGGESTIVE SONG.

"O, Let me kiss him for his mother."

I laid my hand upon Rawdon's shoulder. He impatiently jerked away from the touch. He probably had forgotten who sat next him. He had dealt the cards before—it was the Spaniard's turn this time. While the fiend's shuffle—the slif, slif, slif of the sliding cards went on—Rawdon for the first time since his entrance raised his eyes. They rested upon the third figure to the right of his opponent, and I felt him flinch in every muscle. His staring eyes directed my gaze to a slender, boyish fellow, whose dark, fiery eyes and olive skin bespoke the mixed blood in his veins, although the Spanish was in the ascendant. His small, boyish face was relieved from effeminacy by a heavy, pointed mountache. The thick, black hair rolled in curling masses about a well shaped head. He was dressed differently from the most of the rough looking men about. The velveteen jacket was seamed with white. In his belt glistened the butts of a pair of silver mounted pistols, and the hilt of the inseparable new-country knife. His eyes were fastened in an intense, straightforward stare upon Rawdon's pale, excited face, and I think that I never saw such an expression in the human eye before. Somehow I felt suffocating, and longed to be outside in the open air. I think that I unconsciously made an attempt to rise.

Stebbins bore upon my two shoulders with no gentle hands.

"What would you do? We must not leave him."

The game began, slow, deliberate, every movement studied, yet there was an exultant glow in the burly fellow's eye opposite that I did not like, but thought that I comprehended. He intended to win again. The interest deepened. Now and then a sort of gasp or "ugh!" from one or the other told of an unlucky move, and ere long several players suspended their game to watch this one. The small, lithe fellow opposite was half risen and leaning upon his elbows.

Rawdon was more than holding his own in the game.

A thick voice issued from the smoke on the left.

"I bet my pile on the white-livered fellow," meaning Rawdon.

"Mine on the champion gambler of Santa Fe," said another.

Then the same stillness reigned.

Directly my inexperienced eye detected a something unusual—a lightning-like movement on the part of the Spaniard.

"Game's up," called Rawdon, speaking for the first time since sitting down to the table.

"No, sir," said his opponent, "you can't do that here."

"I play with no trickster," hazardously returned Rawdon, carried away by a furious burst of temper.

"Perhaps the American calls me once a trickster," was the furious, broken reply. "Perhaps no more than once."

"I know you, Pedro Firnandize," continued Rawdon. "Your reputation on the Santa Fe was for no second fair game," and with this Rawdon reached out his hand to grasp his bag of dust, which he had tossed upon the table at the commencement of the play.

The incidents of the next minute seem like the lightning panorama of a dream. When Rawdon advanced his hand for the pouch of dust, the Spaniard drew a pistol in a twinkling, with its cold, dark muzzle pointing death to my companion. I had leaped frantically to my feet with the idea of thrusting Rawdon aside, but there was a movement quicker than mine. The small fellow in the velvet doublet sprang upon the narrow table with the lightness and ease of a rubber poppet, and swift as a flash of lightning his delicate, shapely foot flew up and knocked the weapon from the burly gambler's hand. The next movement, rapid as the first, kicked the miscreant in the throat with such force that it threw him chair and all upon the floor. With a rapidity of movement never surpassed, that velvet clad fellow rushed the length of the table and swept every lamp from its position with that irresistible right foot. In an instant all was darkness and confusion.

"This way—quick! or you will never leave here alive," said a low whisper, and some one caught Rawdon by the hand and dashed across the room.

"Give me your hand, Carnes, I have a hold on Rawdon," spoke Stebbins, dragging me I knew not whither.

But the rear entrance was known by others, for the pistol shots struck in the casing, sending the splinters on a slant against us as we dashed through. Five yards from the door the handsome guide spoke again.

"Keep close in the shadow of the wall until you get around to South street, then mingle calmly with the crowd, and do not return to this vicinity."

"And you?" returned Rawdon.

"Go out of Stockton an hour hence with a mule train bound with supplies to the head waters of the Stanislaus."

He was gone, and not one of us had recovered sufficient sense to thank him for our timely escape.

"I hope," said Stebbins, righteously indignant, and turning to Rawdon, "that you have to-night got enough of gambling."

"I can only hope," I put in, speaking low lest I might be overheard, "that if I ever have occasion to enter such a place again, that my life will be insured for the benefit of my friends."

For some time Rawdon did not speak. At last, in unnatural tones, he remarked—

"Boys, you don't know anything about this passion for gambling. It becomes a disease as much as dram-drinking. It is the curse of my life."

But we couldn't understand it, you know.

Some days afterwards Stebbins broke out suddenly—

"Faith! who could that olive-skinned fellow have been that saved you, Rawdon, from a dose of lead?"

Rawdon started from his reverie.

"Can't tell, boys, might have been a purely Providential interference."

"Never," said I, emphatically. "I watched him before the difficulty arose, and, depend upon it, he saved you for your own sake, or for the sake of some one whom he thought that you resembled."

Rawdon seemed uneasy.

"I would give my other bag of dust to know just who he is. I am haunted with the idea that, somewhere, during my travels in New Mexico, I have seen a *fac simile* of the head and eyes of our brave friend."

"Ugh!" shuddered Doles," what a country! what a people! what a Rawdon! Seen a head and eyes toting about New Mexico without a corporeal system attached. Say no more."

"I was particularly stupid," Rawdon resumed, without noticing Doles's running commentary, "that I did not inquire his name."

"We were all too much flurried to think of anything," I resumed.

"Well, in this case, as in all others, regrets are useless; yet, if his business is driving the mule trains that supply the mountain mines, we may meet again as unexpectedly as on this occasion."

Stebbins took occasion soon after this conversation to whisper something in my ear. The sentence startled me, and yet had a weight of truth about it.

What that statement was I shall soon have occasion to tell you.

Answers to Correspondents.

ADDITIONS TO CLUBS.—A correspondent asks "if additions can be made to clubs at the same rate." Yes.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—All manuscripts sent to us should have the price marked upon them if any is desired. Writers of no literary reputation should be satisfied at first if a good field is afforded them to display their talents and gain a name. We do not guarantee the safe return of manuscript, but endeavor to return it safely when desired, and when the requisite stamps are sent. Articles may be good of their kind, and not be suitable for our purposes. Experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their articles prompt attention.

Do not write to us asking whether you shall send on your manuscripts for examination—but send them on at once.

VERSE MONGER (Dover, Del.) writes: "Will you be so kind as to inform me what works are meant by the French, German, Portuguese, and Scottish Iliads? Also give me some idea of their date and other points concerning them." These titles have been applied to certain epic poems in the respective languages mentioned, although the poems in question generally bear no resemblance to the Iliad. The French work referred to is the "Romance of the Rose," a poem written in the latter part of the 13th century. It is an allegorical romance of considerable length, and was held in high esteem by the uncritical readers of the Middle Ages. The German Iliad is the celebrated "Nibelungenlied," or song of the Nibelung, an ancient German epic of great length and considerable merit. Its author and date are unknown. It was collected and put into its present form in 1210, by a wandering Austrian minstrel. It is a tale of war and bloodshed, with a fair sprinkling of magic, such as was suited to the rude taste of the age in which it appeared. The Portuguese Iliad is the Lusiad of Camoens, a poem written in commemoration of the first voyage to India of Vasquez di Gama, the Portuguese discoverer. Out of the bare details of his adventure a very romantic story is woven. The Scottish Iliad is a poem called the Epigoniad, written by Wille Wilkins, the so-called Scottish Homer, who died in 1772. Its subject is the seige of Thebes by the Epigoni, or the Seven Greek Heroes, a traditional event mentioned by Homer.

A. H. (Geneva, Wis.), writes: "I am very much taken up with your answers to correspondents, and now I want to ask you a question or two: 1st. If any of my friends would like to take the Post or Friend, can I add their names to my list at the same club rates? 2d. In looking over Dr. Jayne's Almanac, I find that the sun rises on the 21st of March at 6 o'clock and sets at 6.15. Is that correct? I always supposed the forenoon and afternoon were of the same length. And, again, on the 21st of September the sun rises at 5.47 and sets at 5.59 o'clock, making the forenoon 14 minutes longer than the afternoon; whereas, the afternoon in March is 15 minutes the longest. Will you please explain why it is, and oblige your troublesome correspondent?" We answer your first question in the affirmative. Send along the names. Your difficulty in regard to the vagaries of the Sun, has troubled many another, besides yourself. The variation between the mean and the apparent noon is caused by the fact that the equinoctial, or plane of the earth's equator, is inclined to the ecliptic, or plane of the earth's orbit, and also that this orbit is elliptical, instead of circular in shape. The result is that at one part of the year the sun gains on the time of mean noon, and at another falls behind. This difference between solar and mean noon varies from 16½ minutes before to 14½ minutes after the mean time. At four times in the year, about April 16th, June 16th August 31st, and December 24th, the sun and the clock agree in the time of noon.

J. X. L. GREENY (Salem, Iowa), says: "I want to ask you a question or two. 1st. Is General Scott dead? 2d. Is it proper to leave a young lady at the gate, or to take her up to the door, when accompanying her home? 3d. Will you give me a form for asking a young lady for her company? I want to know what to say in writing a note asking her for her company." General Scott is dead. It would be more polite to take the young lady to the door. In special cases, as for instance, when there is a savage dog loose in the yard, you had better leave her at the gate; or, if you accompany her to the door, request the protection of her company back to the gate. We know of no form that will suit all circumstances. There is no occasion for any special form. It is an easy matter politely to request the pleasure of a lady's company.

MRS. L. A. H. (Bellwood, Tenn.) writes: "Please tell me the true meaning and origin of the term Black Mail." Black mail is money given to freebooters to exempt property from depredation. It now means any exorbitant charge. It comes from the Saxon "Mal," rent tax. Green Mail was rent paid for pasturage. Black is added to such words in the sense of unlawful, or wicked, as in Black art, Black guard, &c.

LETTIE (Sunbury, N. C.) writes: "I have a few questions for your patient consideration, which you will please answer as soon as possible. 1st. What will remove yellow from piano keys? 2d. What is the meaning of the word Marah? 3d. Who is the author of the following lines:

"To weary hearts, to mourning homes,
God's meekest angel gently comes?'

4th. What is the correct pronunciation of Evangeline?" The yellow of piano keys is a result of age in the ivory, and we know of no way to remove it, unless you could perform the miracle of making them young again. Marah means "bitter." The quotation you give is pretty. We think it is from Longfellow. Pronounce as if spelt E-van-ge-leen.

L. S. writes: "Enclosed is a poem subjected to your criticism. Please let me know your decision through the correspondents' column; and also be kind enough to inform me if there is a German edition of the Schonberg-Cotta Family, and the name of its authoress." Your poem is accepted. We do not know of any German edition of the work you mention. The name of the authoress is Mrs. Elizabeth Charles, though we believe she wrote under a nom-de-plume.

L. D. H. (Drakeville,) writes: "In looking over some old papers I noticed a paragraph that speaks of S. S. Packard, offering to instruct fifty women for business. If you will be kind enough to give me his address and tell me who he is, I shall ever feel grateful. I saw the advertisement in the Saturday Evening Post, dated January 21st, 1871." We would be glad to oblige our correspondent, but are unable at this date to give much further information concerning Mr. Packard or his offer. He was the publisher of Packard's Monthly, but that paper has, we believe, been discontinued for some time. It was issued in New York.

J. A. W. (Germantown, Pa.,) writes: "Will you be kind enough to inform me what is meant by the Grandom Institute, and who are entitled to its benefits, and how they may be obtained? By so doing and giving all the information that you can, you will greatly oblige an old subscriber." We know of no institution called the Grandom Institute. We presume you refer to the fund left by Thomas Grandom, from which young men starting business are privileged to borrow money at 6 per cent. interest, and to have the use of it for five years, by giving two freehold securities. There is also a fund to supply coal to respectable householders in reduced circumstances, at half the market price. You can obtain further information by applying to the trustees; of whom Henry C. Townsend, in Walnut St., near 5th, is President.

ENSIGN, (Bangor, Me.,) writes: "Please inform me what is the artificial process of making ice. Of course I do not expect you to give a description of the machine, but simply wish to know the principle of its operation. And can it make ice as good and cheap as by the natural method?" The machines themselves are somewhat complicated, though the principle on which they work is sufficiently simple. The ice is formed through cold produced by the rapid evaporation of ammonia. It is one of nature's laws, that when a liquid evaporates, a large amount of heat disappears or is rendered latent, the gas having a much greater power of absorbing heat than the liquid. If the evaporation is produced by heat, a quantity of this heat is absorbed. If produced by other causes, the gas extracts heat from the surrounding substances. Thus ammonia, liquified by great pressure, is suddenly relieved from pressure and flashes into the gaseous state. In doing so it extracts heat from the substances surrounding it, which, in the ice-making machine, are the cases containing water. This water, suddenly deprived of its heat, is frozen into cakes of solid ice. This is the general principle on which the various machines act, the main object sought being to perform this process cheaply. In your part of the world, the ice made by nature's process can be furnished more cheaply, as yet. But these machines are only in their infancy. Their cheapness of production will probably be much increased. Already in the tropics, artificial ice vies with the imported in cheapness.

S. A. (Georgia) asks: "Will you be kind enough to give me some information concerning the Amazon river, its length, the distance it is navigable, and any other interesting particulars, and you will greatly oblige?" The Amazon is about 4,000 miles long, and, with its tributaries, drains an area of two and a half million square miles. It is navigable to vessels of the largest class for considerably more than 2,000 miles from its mouth. If its tributaries be considered there are afforded in all many thousand miles of navigable water through the heart of South America. The greater portion of these streams runs through tropical forests, comprising the most valuable of woods. They annually overflow their banks through a large portion of their course, converting thousands of square miles of forest into an immense lake. This great stream has been lately thrown open by Brazil to free navigation.

FANTON (Danville, Pa.,) writes: "Will the Post please give me the original meaning of the word Etiquette, and how it came to be applied to its present use?" Etiquette means, "in due order." In past times, on occasions of extra ceremony in the French court, it was customary to issue to the invited guests tickets, which gave the full details of the ceremonies. If everything passed off correctly it was said to have occurred according to the ticket of etiquette. Hence the word came to be applied to all the details of fashionable society, to indicate agreement with the fashionable ticket of etiquette.

MUSICUS, (Niagara, N. Y.,) writes: "Please favor me with the origin of the word Serenade. Also, tell me who was Manoe, and for what is he noted?" Serenade means music in the serene; that is, in the open air at eventide. Ade is from the Greek ode, I sing. Madoc was the son of Owen Gwynedh, King of North Wales, who died in 1169. The tradition concerning him is, that he sailed westward from Wales and discovered America, and that he established a colony somewhere on the southern branches of the Mississippi. Some writers believe in the truth of this expedition, and profess to have discovered traces of the descendents of the colony, but there appears to be no sufficient evidence to substantiate it.

WILSON, (Galveston,) writes: "Will you please inform me of the true meaning of the word Quidnunc, and how it is applied, and you will confer a favor?" A quidnunc is a sort of political Paul Pry, one who pretends to know all that passes, and whose creed it is never to acknowledge ignorance. It is a combination of two Latin words, meaning "What now?" Quidnunc is the chief character in Martin's farce of "The Upholsterer."

W. P., (Alton, Ill.,) writes: "Be kind enough to tell me through your column of answers, was the Fair Rosamond a historical character or simply a personage of fiction? and if so, who was she, and what is her history?" She was a real character, the daughter of Walter, Lord Clifford, and beloved by Henry II. of England. She is said to have been poisoned by his jealous Queen, Eleanor, in 1177. The story goes that her lover built her a house in a garden so intricate in design, that it was called the Labyrinth, for the purpose of hiding her from the fury of his queen. But the latter reached her refuge by the aid of a clew of thread, and succeeded in making away with her.

DIDYMUS (Little Rock, Ark.), writes: "I am told by a friend that there are sometimes rains composed of something very different from water. That various small animals have been known to fall from the sky during rainy weather; that showers of blood have fallen, and various other such prodigious occurrences. The whole of which he devoutly believes, and I utterly doubt. Will you please inform me what foundation there may be for such stories?" There have been some very strange occurrences of the kind, though nothing of an unexplainable character. Among these we may mention a shower of frogs, that took place near Toulouse, in 1804. During a Russian snow-storm, in 1687, black insects, about an inch long, fell in immense quantities. Numerous cases are on record of showers of fish. Herrings and other fish have been known to cover the ground by thousands after such occurrences. On one occasion, in Norway, a shower of rats was poured down from the skies. The cause of this latter phenomenon is well known. An army of rats was on its annual excursion from a hilly country to the lowlands, when they were overtaken by a whirlwind, which lifted them up by hundreds, dropping them at a considerable distance. Similar causes must have produced all these occurrences. Waterspouts may frequently suck up fish from the ocean to the clouds. Last year there was a plentiful shower of small sea shells, near Philadelphia, which must have been in this way sucked up from the Atlantic coast. The story of showers of blood arises from red spots having occasionally been seen on walls and stones, which looked as if they might have fallen from the sky. It is now known that these spots are produced by some vegetable or animal growth.

B. S. (Southington, Conn.) writes: "As you so kindly answer all the questions sent you, good, bad, and indifferent, perhaps you will give me a little information. Whence arose the practice of wishing a blessing when a person sneezes? It has always seemed to me an odd custom. Perhaps you can make it appear more sensible." The custom is found to all nations, civilized and savage alike. It arises from the old idea that good and bad spirits surround and enter the body, and that a sneeze is a sign of their doing so. Various exclamations are used in different nations to prevent the bad spirits from entering. So with some nations, yawning is considered a sign of demoniac obsession.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in our next.]

RIDDLER.

POETICAL ENIGMA.

A correspondent sends us the following and says:—"Will you please publish the enclosed enigma, taken from the Hagerstown Almanac for 1872, and request some of the many readers of your valuable paper to give an answer. It is quite a puzzle, and there is some doubt as to its correctness."

Adam, God made out of the dust,
But thought it best to make me first:
So I was made before the man,
To answer God's most holy plan.

My body God did make complete,
But without arms, or legs, or feet;
My ways and actions did control,
But to my body gave no soul.

A living being I became,
And Adam gave to me my name;
I from his presence then withdrew,
No more of Adam ever knew.

I did my Maker's law obey,
Nor from it ever went astray;
Thousands of miles I went in fear,
But seldom on the earth appear.

For purpose wise, which God did see,
He put a living soul in me:
A son from me my God did claim,
And took from me that soul again.

Now when from me that soul had fled,
I was the same as when first made;
And without hands, or feet, or soul,
I travel on from pole to pole.

I labor hard by day and night,
To fallen men I give great light;
Thousands of people, young and old,
Will by my death great light behold.

No right or wrong can I conceive;
The Scriptures I cannot believe;
Although my name therein is found,
They are to me an empty sound.

No fear of death doth trouble me;
Real happiness I ne'er shall see;
To heaven I shall never go,
Nor to the grave, nor hell below.

Now when these lines you slowly read,
Go search your Bible with all speed;
For that my name is recorded there,
I honestly to you declare.

CHARADE.

My first is the name of a general in Southern Europe now dead, who figured very prominently in his country's affairs.

My second is a lady's name—a color—and something of many shades and varieties, yet always charming in its beauty, freshness, and sweetness.

My whole is a flower. EMILY.

Baltimore, Md.

WORD SQUARE.

An inflamable volatile fluid.
To act for money.
A cap—(Saxon).
An ancient town in Syria.
To blacken.

LITTLE CHARLEY.

CONUNDRUMS.

☞ What is the business that would "soot" anybody? Ans.—Chimney sweeping.

☞ Why is bad music like a violent exertion of the limbs and muscles? Ans.—Because it is an unwelcome strain.

☞ Why is a visiting card like an article of clothing? Ans.—Because it's a paper collar (caller).

☞ Why can't the cook eat her apron? Ans.—Because it goes against her stomach.

☞ When are skipping lambs like library volumes? Ans.—When they are bounding sheep.

☞ Why are young ladies given to blushing? Ans.—Because it's a *becoming* vice.

☞ When is an actor a good friend to another actor? Ans.—When he takes his part.

☞ A young hopeful asked his father, who was in the habit of tippling, "Why is Brown's saloon like a counterfeit bill?" Ans.—Because you can't pass it." Exit hopeful.

RECEIPTS.

TO USE NICELY COLD FOWLS.—Pick the meat from the bones; break the bones, and boil in very little water; stew the meat, gravy, and dressing of the cold fowls together, and add the soup.

TO USE THE MEAT AND GRISTLE OF A SIRLOIN.—Cut all the gristle from the bone, boil until perfectly tender; if there is enough to serve for a dish, add vinegar, butter, pepper, and salt, and it will resemble soup; if not, mix the meat with it, fricassee brown, and add butter, salt, pepper, a dust of flour, and sufficient water to make the gravy, and serve with dry bread toasted; lay the bread on the platter, and pour over it the fricassee.

COLD EGGS AN EGG BALLS.—Take the yolks of the eggs, work them to a paste with a little butter; chop the whites as fine as possible, make them in balls or small flat cakes, and brown them in butter.

COLD BEEFSTEAKS.—Make a plain paste, cover a plate, and bake it, put in the meat cut in small bits, put it in the pie, add seasoning to suit, cover and bake; it will bake in twenty minutes.

COLD FISH.—Take any kind of cold fish, pick it up finely, mix it with potatoes, make it in small cakes, and fry it brown.

APPLE PIE.—Take in the proportion of one pound of flour to one-fourth of a pound of butter; have the butter and flour very cold; cut the butter in small thin slices into the flour; stir it up quickly, not working the butter into the flour; add just enough water to moisten the paste; don't work it up in a lump, but take it up ragged, and put enough for a pie on the moulding-board; roll it out thin, and cover the bottom of the pie with the paste. Have ready sour apples sliced thin; fill the plate with them; roll out the top crust, and cover the apples; cut off the crust neatly without pressing down the edge, and put it in the oven. When the crust is baked, the apples will be soft; take out the pie, remove the cover, add sugar to the taste, and a piece of butter, the size of an almond; work it well through the apple, spread it evenly, and put on the crust. If nutmeg is relished, grate a dust over the apple, before putting on the cover, but don't mix it in. Apple pies should always be warmed before eating.

SPONGE CAKE, No. 1.—One pound of pulverized loaf-sugar, twelve eggs, and half a pound of flour. Separate the yolks from the whites and put them in the sugar. Beat the whites separately, as stiff as possible, while another person beats with the hand the yolks and sugar; add the flour, a pinch of salt, and what flavoring is to be used, and bake immediately.

"MR. TIMOTHY," said a young lady who had been showing off her wit at the expense of a dangler, "you remind me of a barometer that is filled with nothing in the upper story." "Divine Almira," meekly replied the adorer, "in thanking you for that compliment, let me remind you that you occupy my upper story entirely."